



AN AMERICAN EARL

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AN AMERICAN EARL.

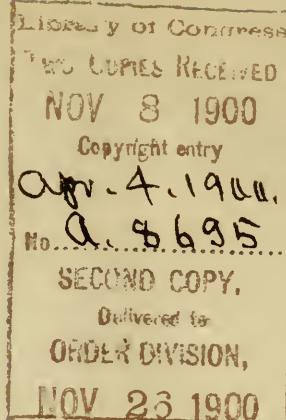
A DRAMA OF TO-DAY.

IN FIVE ACTS.

BY
SAMUEL SILVERBURG.

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AN AMERICAN EARL.

ACT I.

Scene 1. Parlors of the Hotel Glenalvon, New York. As curtain rises ADELAIDE is discovered seated at piano. She plays a few bars abstractedly. Air, "Heimweh."

ADELAIDE: Ah! that strain! How it clings! Why can I not forget? Why will the old, sad memories linger? Why come, now that I am free, to blur the hope of future peace of mind? Heimweh! "Longings of home!" Home! What is home to me? Husband—child—yet no home. The word a misnomer in his presence, and out of it a poignant unreality. Him I could forget—perhaps an easy task—but my child, my darling Violet, how shall I endure to be forever apart from her? (*Rises and comes down.*) What is she doing now? Is she gay? Is she happy? Is she well—ill—does she miss me—call for "dear mam-

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ma"? What does he tell her—how explain my absence—how satisfy her childish questionings? Does he teach her to love or hate the mother, who through a father's cruelty alone has abandoned her? Oh! cease, cease, brain! Let me forget all! Do not drive me to madness! Yes! yes! I shall forget! I shall forget! (*Turns toward piano.*) O Music! O Art! To thee I look! Thou wilt fill the void! Thou shalt be husband—child—all to me! (*Seats herself at piano and plays softly.*)

Enter PEARL.

PEARL (*pauses and looks disappointedly at ADELAIDE*): There she is, utterly unconcerned! Isn't she provoking! Dear me, Mrs. Lester, you are a—a-sphynx—yes! a veritable sphynx! No word—no sign to show you are the least bit excited! The rest of the household is in a perfect ferment—everybody on the *qui vive* of expectation—mamma and I as fidgetty as a couple of old maids, while you—oh, Mrs. Immovable Lester, how can you—be—so—calm?

ADELAIDE (*affecting indifference*): What can it be that has disturbed the serenity of my sweet Pearl's angelic temper?

PEARL: Angelic temper! Oh, you never saw

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me in a rage! But—continue to feign ignorance of what is going to happen, and I will not answer for the consequences! Now, do, Mrs. Lester, exhibit a woman's curiosity!—ask some questions—utter some sound!

ADELAIDE: Well?

PEARL: Well! A sound indeed—and nothing more! Now listen. His steamer arrived this morning. Word came post haste, or telephone haste, to be exact, that he would be here this evening. Perhaps his cab even now is at the door. Think! he may at this very instant be ascending the steps! Why, I am all in a flutter! And don't you think he will feel strange? He—

ADELAIDE: Who?

PEARL: Why, the Count, of course! Tantalizer! Come, now, Mrs. Lester, please be serious. Tell me truly, has a real French nobleman with a pedigree—

ADELAIDE: As long as a comet's tail no charms for me, eh? (*Laughing heartily.*) What delicious naïveté! Why, my dear pet, don't you know that all men are alike? That titles and pedigree make them no less nor more than mere pitiful clay? I hope my dear Pearl is not going to fall into the pernicious habit of hyperbole in describing a man.

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PEARL (*ruefully*): I described no one. You—you denied me the pleasure. Permit me, first, to express myself. Then, if you find fault with my romanticism, scold me. But please, Mrs. Lester, don't break in at the most critical and interesting period.

ADELAIDE: There, there, I beg your pardon, dear Pearl. I was rude. Now, provided my *amende honorable* is accepted, proceed. In glowing terms tell of the superexcellences possessed by this peerless son of France. I am all impatience.

PEARL: First, he is decidedly handsome.

ADELAIDE: Yes.

PEARL: Second, his family is among the wealthiest in all France.

ADELAIDE: Yes.

PEARL: Third, his lineage is second to none——

ADELAIDE: Yes.

PEARL: Dating back, oh, I don't know how far into the Middle Ages.

ADELAIDE: Yes.

PEARL: Fourth, if the monarchy, so mamma says, is ever restored, the Count will be one of the first men of France.

ADELAIDE: Anything else?

PEARL: That's all just now. Tell me what you think of him.

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ADELAIDE: From your description? It is insufficient. You said not one word about his personal character—the very crown of all. A man may be handsome, rich, titled—yet lacking in the one immortal thing that stamps him a real man—high character. The Count's true worth must be sifted from amid the dross of high estate and personal appearance.

PEARL: Are you not severe, Mrs. Lester?

ADELAIDE: Sincere, my dear, not severe. The Count may be all you think him—and more. But worldly wisdom says draw no premature conclusions. In the glamour of a meaningless title many young girls see visions of an ideal existence. Sad experience has in some cases shattered this idol. But others have yet to learn the lesson. I speak thus plainly to you, dear Pearl, because I love you. You will forgive my frankness, will you not?

PEARL: Indeed, Mrs. Lester, I thank you. You are very kind. Perhaps I have been just a trifle carried away by appearances; but, believe me, not seriously.

ADELAIDE: I am certain of that. When was your first meeting with the Count?

PEARL: At Nice, six months ago. Both the ridiculous and romantic mingled at our introduc-

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tion. It was this way. Mamma and I were out driving, and while still quite a distance from our hotel it suddenly began to rain. Gracious! how it did pour! Our coachman jumped down and tried to adjust the coach top, but it had become fixed and he was unable to raise it. Wholly unprepared for such an emergency, the day being fine when we started, mamma and I stood helpless in the drenching rain. But, as in every well-regulated romance, the hero was near. A closed coupé dashes up, a gentleman quickly alights and politely proffers the use of his vehicle. It was no time for hesitation or apologies, I can assure you. Like mice mamma and I scampered to reach the haven of refuge. Of course the gentleman was the Count. With him was his younger brother. Fifteen minutes later we arrived at the hotel, slightly damp, our furbelows rather disarranged, but we were none the worse for the little adventure. Mamma exacted a promise from the Count to return the next day, so we might again thank him for his providential appearance. He called and became quite friendly. He speaks English fluently. That was opportune, as mamma speaks no French. He is perfectly charming!

ADELAIDE: We will hope that good manners, education, and agreeableness are peculiar to no one

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class or nationality. Even in our country, believed by some to be the home of the vulgar, there are indeed men who combine these self-same attributes. But to our *mouton*, as the French say. The Count comes for a reason—a good one. Is it not to press his suit in *propria persona* to the lovely Miss Pearl Westholme?

PEARL: Really, Mrs. Lester, I—why, such a thought never entered my mind.

ADELAIDE: Innocence! You know he does! Well?

PEARL: Well! Ask mamma.

ADELAIDE: Ask mamma! You digress, my dear. He wants to marry you. Do you affect him?

PEARL: Truly, Mrs. Lester, your question is unanswerable. I scarcely know the Count. He was friendly with us, but far from intimate. He never obtruded himself upon me, and I have not the slightest idea of his sentiments.

ADELAIDE: Then I will enlighten you. He is the willing victim of an American girl's charms. He comes now, carrying his heart in his hand, to lay it at her feet.

PEARL: Oh, dear! (*Suddenly:*) Mrs. Lester, why do you not remarry? .

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ADELAIDE: I? Why, I—I—oh, pshaw! What a question! At my age—

(ADELAIDE, *who has been seated on divan, rises and crosses stage.*)

PEARL (*seated*): At your age? You said you were but twenty-six.

ADELAIDE: True, but since he—he—died my inclinations run in a different channel. Music and the stage now absorb my future hopes. I shall not marry again.

PEARL (*musingly*): It is all so strange.

ADELAIDE: What?

PEARL: Your decision. A woman like you, Mrs. Lester, seems so out of place on the stage. I can think of you only as queen of some noble man's heart—never as a mimic queen to delight the careless public. I am so drawn to you, dear Mrs. Lester. (*Crosses to ADELAIDE and puts her arm around her waist.*) You are so different from the frivolous women one often meets in society—so serious, so earnest, so sincere. You always make me think of the deep, placid ocean. And you had no children?

ADELAIDE: N-o-o. None. (*Turns her face to conceal her agitation.*)

PEARL: The sweet creatures! You love them, don't you?

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ADELAIDE (*disengaging herself from PEARL's embrace*): I am a woman. (*Crosses back.*)

PEARL (*going close to ADELAIDE*): Yes, yes, I understand. Ah, dear Mrs. Lester, you will marry again—you must! God will not a second time deny your prayer. He giveth unto the lowliest. Did He not say, "Suffer little children to come unto me"? How could they come unto Him unless He blessedly gave them to us? (*ADELAIDE, overcome by emotion, stifles a cry and sinks on divan.*) Why, Mrs. Lester, you are ill. Let me—

ADELAIDE (*rising with an effort*): It is nothing, dear Pearl, I assure you! A mere passing weakness. I have not been well and—the air is close. (*Goes to door.*) Now I am better. (*Sits in rocker.*) Of what were we speaking? Oh, yes! (*Pauses.*) Ha! ha! ha! (*Laughs forcedly.*) Excuse me, one of Mr. Seabury's quaint sayings came into my mind. Isn't he eccentric?

PEARL: Very. He amuses me greatly. Surely the Count has arrived. Expect me in a moment. (*Exit.*)

ADELAIDE: Lies—lies—lies! Ever the penalty of a false position! That dear girl trusts me—loves me! How she would despise me did she know the truth! I cannot—I must not tell her!

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Let me still be to her, at least, the good, earnest, exalted woman, whatever I may be in the judgment of the world. She——

Reënter PEARL.

PEARL (*coming down*): How provoking! Unless he joins us in precisely ten minutes I shall cut his acquaintance. There!

ADELAIDE: Do not be impatient, dear. Is no one else in this house worthy to occupy your thoughts—I mean among the men?

PEARL (*sits, divan*): Who?

ADELAIDE: Mr. Widdeston, for instance.

PEARL: Mamma likes him——

ADELAIDE: And you?

PEARL: I think him a perfect gentleman.

ADELAIDE: His estimate of you is not based on a mere abstraction.

PEARL: What can he see in me?

ADELAIDE: The most adorable of our sex! Ah, little witch, know your own sway over the male heart ere it bring fell disaster to one or more! He flatters himself his admiration is unobserved.

PEARL: Do you jest, Mrs. Lester?

ADELAIDE: No, indeed. The subject is far too serious to be treated lightly. Be careful of your

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smiles when the Count comes, or truly I shall fear the worst.

PEARL: Fear the worst! You alarm me!

ADELAIDE: There will be no duel, I can promise you. That method of settling heart affairs is, you know, obsolete in this country. Your own choice will decide the question. Now, tell me, who is this wonderful Delamere who comes this evening?

PEARL: He was here once before, and played and sang for us. He is an exquisite performer, and sings beautifully. Mrs. Hartley has always spoken very highly of him.

ADELAIDE: It is her ultra-championship of the gentleman's pretensions that has aroused my curiosity. Handsome, talented, versatile, witty, all in the superlative degree, presupposes a very paragon. I confess I am skeptical. Does the age afford nourishment for so rare a product?

Enter MRS. WESTHOLME escorting the COUNT DE LEMPRIERE.

PEARL (*jumping up*): Here's mamma and the Count!

MRS. WESTHOLME: Mrs. Lester, Count Emile de Lempriere. (ADELAIDE *bows*.)

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(The Count advances to Pearl, holding out his hand, while Mrs. Westholme and Adelaide stand aside and engage in business of conversation.)

COUNT: This is indeed a pleasure! I have looked forward to it for months! How delightful to be again on terra firma among friends! You have, mademoiselle, changed—for the better—more than I can express!

PEARL: I thank you, Count. Did you have a pleasant voyage?

COUNT: Very. Clear skies and unruffled seas day after day, yet the sail seemed long. It was my impatience. Ah! you can understand the reason!

PEARL: We shall study, Count, to make your stay pleasant. Then perhaps you will forget the separation from your native land.

COUNT: *La belle France!* We love our own country! That is natural. But I shall feel at home here. Already I am charmed! New York, the Paris of the New World! How grand is your harbor! How mighty your shipping! How noble your bridge! How imposing that great work of my countryman—your statue of Liberty! Gazing, my breast received the thrill! It is sublime!

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Fit, indeed, to symbolize the friendship of two great countries! Ah! It is all fine—all fine!

PEARL: You are enthusiastic, Count.

COUNT: The subject deserves it. Nothing stirs the heart like the achievements of nations. France has done much for civilization. America, too, has done much. But in art—in art my country leads the world.

MRS. WESTHOLME (*approaching*): Few will dispute that, Count. Which reminds me that a countrywoman of yours has just taken New York by storm. I refer to Mademoiselle Éloise Chambertin.

COUNT: Yes, I have seen her. She is a tragedienne of magnificent power. Her greatest creation I have not yet witnessed. I was in Italy at its *premier*. When I returned to Paris—*ma foi!* your American managers are like the lightning! A fabulous offer by cable, and before we awake, almost, our first artist is in America!

ADELAIDE: Which proves simply, Count, that even if art does not originate here, we must have it at any price.

COUNT (*smiling*): Indeed, that is true. It is well said. True art will yet rise in America.

ADELAIDE: We sincerely hope so, Count.

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Enter MRS. HARTLEY and DELAMERE. ADELAIDE and DELAMERE both start at sight of each other.

MRS. HARTLEY: Ladies, Mr. Delamere. Count, Mr. Delamere. Now I will ask you to enter the music-room. Some of our friends have already preceded us.

(The COUNT goes out with MRS. WESTHOLME and PEARL, one on each arm.)

Mrs. Lester, Mr. Delamere is a very brilliant musician. More than that, in fact—he is an artist. He plays and sings his own compositions, writing both the words and music. His playing is divine and his voice is melody itself.

DELAMERE: Mrs. Hartley praises me far beyond my desert. You shall judge for yourself, *Mrs.* Lester.

MRS. HARTLEY: I must go in. We shall await your pleasure, Mr. Delamere. *(Exit.)*

DELAMERE *(after a short pause)*: This is an amazing transformation! What does it mean?

ADELAIDE: Simply this—I have left my husband.

DELAMERE: Left Frank?

ADELAIDE: Yes. You have heard nothing from him?

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DELAMERE: Nothing. As you are aware, I flit from place to place. Letters never reach me till the news is stale. Tell me of the trouble.

ADELAIDE: Why should I hesitate? You have ever been his most trusted friend. But your new rôle—your change of name—

DELAMERE: Has no particular significance. The pseudonym of Delamere was adopted purely for professional reasons. Now, about yourself.

ADELAIDE: It is a difficult subject. You know my husband. His is a complex character not easily read nor easily dissected. Our natures were unsuited. He, calm and philosophic; I, impressionable and confiding, at least until I met and married him. For two years past his love had been gradually growing colder. As the days came and went his neglect of me and my child became more marked. Leaving us to wait wistfully for a caress, he would turn to his gods—his books—with an ill-concealed joy that showed but too plainly where his happiness lay. Human feeling, the pride of other men, was in his eyes a silly weakness. Strange philosophy! that in the mere pride of stoicism kills the springs of all emotion! Such is his doctrine. A solitary dungeon, lighted by the rays of his own intellect, suffices for his earthly desires, and me he would seek to entomb with him—

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an age of black, hopeless monotony! Was it not enough to crush my heart, to chill my blood, to desolate my hopes? At length, when human endurance had reached its limit, I rebelled. He turned the opportunity into a tirade against our sex. It was plain that I was the concrete object of his arraignment. But never before had I known him to be so fiercely cynical, so cruelly unjust. At that moment I fairly hated him! "Set me free!" I cried. He looked at me steadily for an instant, then said slowly: "Do you mean that, Adelaide?" "Yes," I replied. Without another word he walked to his desk, sat down, and began to write. Rising, he laid a paper before me which I signed without looking at the text. He had finally renounced me, I agreeing to accept twenty-five hundred dollars in lieu of all future claims for support. The next day he gave me the money and I came at once to New York. Here I had the good fortune to meet an old school friend, Dorothy Deming, an actress, who lately has been pleading my cause with her manager. I shall go on the stage at the first opportunity. There, you know all. Of course they think I am a widow here.

DELAMERE: Indeed, a most charming one!

ADELAIDE: It is a wretched situation, but I am

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trying to forget the cause and live a new life—I trust a happier one.

DELAMERE: I know it will be a merrier one. What you endured was unpleasant, I grant. But you must not be too severe in your judgment of Frank. He was to blame; yet he should not be held entirely responsible for circumstances which were caused mainly by business reverses. He neglected you simply through preoccupation. His fortitude—or, as you call it, his philosophy—under misfortune irritated you. That is the whole story. Does he know you are here?

ADELAIDE: No. I wish him to remain ever in ignorance of my whereabouts.

DELAMERE (*drawing near to ADELAIDE*): He shall. Let us hope——

Enter DOROTHY.

DOROTHY: They are waiting, Adelaide.

ADELAIDE: Dorothy, this is Mr. Delamere. My old school friend, of whom I spoke, Mr. Delamere. (DELAMERE bows.) (*To DOROTHY:*) Mr. Delamere and I have met before. But come, I will tell you about it later. We must not delay the programme any longer. (*Exeunt.*)

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Enter Mr. WIDDESTON.

WIDDESTON: Not a word from Bagsby in a whole week. His silence is mystifying, to say the least. Unless tangible evidence is secured on his present trip to show whether the boy is dead or alive, I shall abandon the quest and return to England. The Duke will be disappointed. But it cannot be helped. No stone has been left unturned in four long years to discover the Earl's fate. Ah! could the words—hasty and violent—spoken fourteen years ago be recalled! Could the Duke but live again through that fateful scene, how different the ending! I well remember it. A youthful escapade, a threat of durance vile, hot words between father and son—the temper of the Kenmores burning in both—a disappearance, a search—at first desultory, then changing to concerted effort by all the forces at command—and now, perhaps, the sequel. In oblivion the Earl Charles completes the sad chapter begun on that still sadder day! Doubtless in the vastness of the mighty West he, the scion of the noblest house in Britain, sleeps unmarked, unknown! Death alone explains his complete obliteration. Then back to England at once if—but I can't go away like that! She—ah! what does she care? Why should she

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care? Hum! hum! (*striking his breast.*) Symptoms of rank sentimentality may be excused in some cases—in a boy fresh from college, for instance, but what palliation can be offered when an old, callous widower like myself permits himself to be enmeshed like the veriest swain! Out upon ye, mad sprite! Alluring as a seraph art thou, yet full of whims as a satyr! The fairest creature in all Christendom has cast a spell over me. Escape there is none. She, I know, suspects nothing. Her mother and the others are equally ignorant of my feelings. It is time the ice were broken. Yet I fear—I fear—but it must be done. How to persuade artless innocence that Dan Cupid has found a lurking-place here (*lays hand on heart*) and she the object! Oh, the impossibility of it—the hopelessness! This suspense must be soon ended or it will end me!

Enter SEABURY.

SEABURY: Ah! Widdeston, the individual of my ruminations! Beginning where we terminated yesterday, you having, doubtless, meanwhile cogitated seriously upon the irrefutable arguments presented for your consideration on that auspicious occasion, your mind is now in that receptive

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condition so essential to a proper appreciation of their lucidity, logic, and luminosity. Having agreed upon this point, we proceed to the analysis of the functions of a republican form of government as differentiated from the effete system which you have incontinently advocated. In passing, I desire to asseverate that my lucubrations and their natural corrollary, the logical deductions of politico-scientific thought, shall be couched in vernacular so perspicacious that even the unenlightened intellect will have no difficulty in assimilating their concentrated principles of scientific reasoning. Therefore, sir, when you or another presume to enter the arena of debate with Thaddeus Seabury, it behooves you to fortify yourself for the inevitable and overwhelming assault which you invite by your temerity in combating fundamental principles such as I seek to disseminate. As the self-constituted protagonist of untrammeled liberty of speech, I ask where, in all this bounteous universe, does it flourish more gloriously than here, in this land of the free and home of the brave? You, sir, have dared to draw comparisons between our illimitable freedom, our individual sovereignty, and that enjoyed by the people who grovel under the effeteism of Europe. You, sir, have dared to question the unquestioned superi-

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ority of a republican form of government. And now, sir, I proceed to hurl at you, in thoughts that breathe and words that burn—

WIDDESTON: Excuse me, but could I ask you to postpone your disquisition to a later period? I am hungry. The cravings—

SEABURY: Further explanation is superfluous. The eloquence of unsatiated longings scintillates from your entire being. Far be it from me to stay the enjoyment attendant upon judicious gastronomical replenishment. Therefore perambulate, my dear sir, explore the commissariat, and thus fortified, return and— (*WIDDESTON breaks away and exits.*) He retreats under fire. Ah, I felicitate myself that few, very few have been able to withstand those verbal and argumentative batteries which Thaddeus Seabury never hesitates to utilize for the demolition of theories inimical to the propagation of natural liberty throughout the universe. Our English cousins represent the apotheosis of egotistic inflation. I truly grieve as I meditate upon the consummation in store for the egotist. Widdeston is a man of parts—a man of credibility—a man of reasonable mental caliber, yet his egotism prevents him from perceiving that outside this great country—*my country*—liberty exists only in the imagination.

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Let the world look at us! Unassailable we stand at every point! As I contemplate the greatness of the country responsible for *me*, for Washington, for Lincoln, for Grant, my bosom heaves with a not unnatural enthusiasm! Of what avail, then, is the bombastic magniloquence of envious detractors against the solidified and monumental facts of our historical achievement as emblazoned for all time upon the tablets of fame? Let the galled jade wince; our withers are unwrung! Eclipse is first, the rest are—nowhere!

Enter MRS. WESTHOLME, PEARL, and the COUNT.

MRS. WESTHOLME: Count, this is Mr. Seabury. Mr. Seabury, the Count Emile de Lempriere. (*They bow.*)

COUNT: Charmed, sir! Within the minute your name was spoken. I am told you have the grand patriotism. That is good.

SEABURY: Verbal expletives, my dear Count, are valued according to their application. (*The COUNT looks puzzled.*) It is my pride and my privilege to be honored as a denizen of this glorious land. Here (*sweeping gesture*) I made my initial appearance on the rostrum of life, as my father did before me, as his father did before him,

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and as daily the elect of earth are appearing. Here I have quaffed inspiration for sixty years, and I flatter myself, sir, that I have rendered to my country an adequate return for the beatitude it has conferred upon me. Here we recognize no titles. Nevertheless I greet you, Count, as a representative of a sister republic endeavoring to extricate herself from the domination of continental traditions.

COUNT: It is, perhaps, my misfortune that the title I bear is a relic of an imperial *régime* which no longer exists in my country. We have accepted the republic. My family have never been fomenters of discord.

SEABURY: Unpremeditated utterances such as mine, sir, are not intended, nor should they be construed, as reflections either upon nations or individuals. Your ruminations may be tinged with regret as the consciousness of the inexorability of that fate which molded you a foreigner ultimately takes possession of your faculties, but I am unable to offer even infinitesimal encouragement in mitigation of the comprehensive fact that you have been denied the proud privileges conferred only through American citizenship. In this country, sir, we are free. Free, and untrammeled as the pellucid atmosphere that encompasses us on every

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side. From the knight of the broom, sir, in the simplicity and quietude of his humble domicile, to the multi-millionaire housed in sumptuosity, we revel in a freedom unique, magnificent, unbounded. Honors and emoluments in the plenitude of a truly popular government are distributed broadcast, not confined to that fortunate minority who fatten wherever monarchies hold high carnival. Here, sir, the innumerable prizes that in business, politics, and society dangle temptingly to the competition of every citizen are by the perfection of our economic system conveyed within attractive reach of all. For sixty years——

Enter WIDDESTON.

Excuse me, Count. Now Widdeston—— (*Takes WIDDESTON by the buttonhole, while MRS. WESTHOLME seizes the COUNT'S arm, motions to PEARL, and the three latter exit.*) But before we begin where we terminated so inauspiciously our last dissertation, I desire to offer a suggestion. A novel concoction, conceived in the mental storehouse of an acknowledged connoisseur, has recently demonstrated its claim to my unstinted approbation. Initially, to irrigate; then, to the further ventilation of fundamentals in political science, in syllogistic reasoning, in—— (*Both exit.*)

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Enter ADELAIDE and DELAMERE.

ADELAIDE: You see him to-morrow?

DELAMERE: Yes. Shall I bear him a message?

ADELAIDE: You are not serious?

DELAMERE: Never more so in my life. Shall I?

ADELAIDE: No, a thousand times no! Can you really think me so weak?

DELAMERE: Not weak—only longing!

ADELAIDE: Never—for him! You will not mention our meeting?

DELAMERE: Depend upon my reserve. You know why I go to Albany?

ADELAIDE: To consult him regarding the mine.

DELAMERE: Were it not for that I should not leave you.

ADELAIDE: You are very kind. But your interests and his demand that you give instant attention to this mining matter.

DELAMERE: Very true. It is important. The property is, I think, quite valuable, and for Frank's sake must not be neglected. Now tell me, Adelaide, what are our relations to be in the future?

ADELAIDE: Yours and Frank's?

DELAMERE: Pshaw, no! Yours and mine.

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ADELAIDE: What should they be save as in the past—friends?

DELAMERE: Nothing more?

ADELAIDE: More? Is anything nobler than disinterested friendship?

DELAMERE: Are you satisfied—happy?

ADELAIDE: Satisfied, yes; happy, no.

DELAMERE: You may be happy.

ADELAIDE: I do not seek happiness.

DELAMERE: Then I gaze on marble—a Galatea stands before me. But I shall be the Pygmalion to restore you to life. For what is happiness but life? Without it there is no life.

ADELAIDE: The future offers forgetfulness. That shall be my goal.

DELAMERE: The future offers love—happiness—everything!

ADELAIDE: Never for me! No, there is but one way. I must look to art for the things that have been denied me where I had best reason to expect them.

DELAMERE: A most unnatural hope! You deceive yourself, Adelaide. Live without love—doom yourself to sexual isolation through sentimental allegiance to a man who is now your husband in name only! You are not in earnest.

ADELAIDE: Sentimental allegiance, as you call

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it, does not sway my heart. He has renounced me at my wish. I am now free——

DELAMERE: No, not free!

ADELAIDE: Not free?

DELAMERE: Never while earth holds a joy you fear to embrace! Ah! Adelaide, be not blind to the happy chance that has thrown us once again together! Accept the destiny which now beams so brightly in your path!

ADELAIDE: Your words are wild.

DELAMERE: You make them so! Plainly, shall I not be the instrument of your future happiness?

ADELAIDE: Were it *possible* to attain bliss, it matters not to me who or what is the instrument. It is useless to speculate further. Regrets alone can come where hopes are so vainly builded.

DELAMERE: Listen, Adelaide. You misunderstand me. You are a married woman. You know men. You have known an unloving one. Is his place in your heart to be eternal? Shall the shadow forever dislodge the substance? Can passion—love—man-hunger—the ecstasy of anticipation—be subdued at will? Can the fruition of earth's highest delights be coldly viewed, then dismissed by a word? It is not so! It cannot be so!

ADELAIDE: What is all this to me? I can never love again.

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DELAMERE: Yes, it is within your reach. Here I dedicate my life to you—I offer you all! Be mine!

ADELAIDE: Do you mean——

DELAMERE: Yes, I would fulfill the place left vacant by another.

ADELAIDE: Is it possible that you—— No! I will not believe it!. There is some mistake!

DELAMERE: One word. Has your knowledge of a man not made essential to you the possession of another? Has——

ADELAIDE: Hush! No more, sir! I now understand you. But I am loath to accept the meaning your words convey. Your friendship for my husband—for me—your reputation—character—the brilliancy of the career that confronts you—all unite to question my conclusion. If you can say nothing to remove my doubts in your honor and faith I shall now bid you good-night.

DELAMERE: Adelaide, hear me! I must utter the thought that consumes my soul! I love you!

ADELAIDE: You have said enough! Good-night!

(As ADELAIDE turns to go he seizes her around the waist and kisses her passionately. She struggles to free herself, but he holds her in a vise-like

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grip. Gazing steadily into her eyes, he seems to exert a strange power over her.)

DELAMERE: Adelaide! Love! Give me your answer—now! Say I am not to leave you! Say—
(*By a mighty effort she breaks from him and goes out. He laughs good-humoredly.*) A rebuff at last! Oh, well! easily won, lightly prized, they say! Good! The woman who surrenders at the first attack is scarcely worth capture! Ah! my queenly Adelaide, your favors are doubly sweet, your charms doubly precious because guarded so jealously! I merely await the day when you shall resign them all to me!

CURTAIN.

END OF ACT I.

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ACT II.

Time: The next day.

Scene 1. FRANK MILWARD'S study. Albany.
A table, with student lamp and open books.
Oil-painting on wall. Two framed photos on
top of writing desk, also books and papers.
MILWARD discovered writing.

MILWARD: Another batch of copy finished!
(Sighs.) What an eternal grind! There! that's the food upon which my ambition to attain eminence in the literary world fain must feed itself. Ha! ha! ha! Eminence in the literary world! If the situation were less critical it would appeal with stronger emphasis to my risibilities. A typical penny-a-liner with a stipend scarcely sufficient to keep the wolf from the door! A thing to laugh about, indeed! Well, the mind is free, whatever shackles now bind me to earth. Ah, archer of fate! You have found in me a shining mark.

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Striving ever after the golden apple of the Hesperides, how often have I seen it turn to ashes in my hand! With gaze riveted on the Parnassian heights, I have ignored the pitfalls below. Wealth is now gone—stay! Shall it be counted alone in that glittering dross which buys and sells men's souls? Have I not more than wealth in the affection of a loving child? Would millions compensate for her loss? In her do I not find the solace of a lifetime of ceaseless toil—thwarted ambition—defeated aspirations? I am ungrateful. (*Falls on knees.*) O Thou Great Being who rulest over all, forgive Thou me that in the darkness of my earthly vision perceivest not that Thy way is always best! Chasten in all things Thy poor servant who bowest contritely to Thy will, yet, O God! in Thy infinite mercy take not away my darling child! Leave her to sweeten life—old age—to pour the balm of filial love upon the aching heart—to soothe—to cheer—to comfort. This I ask, O Mighty Father! Amen. (*Rises.*) Yes, it is she that weds me both to heaven and earth. And her mother—she who, forsaking duty—the highest, noblest—in the haste of an ill-considered resolve, even now, perhaps, sheds the bitter tears of late repentance—what expiation shall be hers? Alas! alas! That she must learn the hollowness

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of the world she courts only through a contact that contaminates!

Enter DELAMERE.

DELAMERE: In your den as usual, I see.

MILWARD: Why, my dear fellow! (*They shake hands.*) How are you? What's the news? Expected you long ago.

DELAMERE: Social duties in the city caused the delay. Couldn't break away, you know. The ladies, after all, my dear boy, are supreme. Ergo, you have been neglected.

MILWARD: I am not in the least jealous of their regard for you. Women are a part—if not all—of your religion. But this business of ours, George—

DELAMERE: Wait a moment. Delamere, in the future. My sudden rise in the firmament of art made a change in name desirable. Delamere, poet-musician, art connoisseur, littérateur, critic, and man of society! Such is my present metropolitan status.

MILWARD: Very wonderful, indeed, and I congratulate you heartily upon your success. But I am reminded at the same time that genius usually spells madness. Now compose that teeming,

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erratic brain of yours and tell me how fares our mining project?

(*DELAMERE, who has been looking at photo of ADELAIDE on desk, pays no attention to MILWARD.*)

DELAMERE: Beautiful woman, your wife. Where is she?

MILWARD: My wife? Oh! That is—Adelaide? Why, she—she's gone, George.

DELAMERE: Gone?

MILWARD: Yes, finally. We have separated.

DELAMERE: Is it possible! Well, I'm sorry for you, old boy. But I cannot understand her motive in leaving her home.

MILWARD: Motive! Exists there the man who can fathom a woman's motives or her heart?

DELAMERE: I doubt it. How came the disagreement?

MILWARD: Neither in one day nor a month. It was the culmination of years. I saw it—I was prepared for it.

DELAMERE: Your little daughter—

MILWARD: Remains with me. Nothing but death shall part us. My very life-blood flows in her veins. All may go—let wrack and ruin encompass me—with her by my side all is still sunshine.

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DELAMERE: Sunshine! Yet you loved your wife.

MILWARD: I did. I love her even now. She has not wronged me! No, in *my* heart her absolution is complete. But how shall she answer her own when the sacred image of an only child mutely pleads for a mother's presence—for a mother's love?

DELAMERE: She may return.

MILWARD: Ah, my friend, that wish is father to the thought. Her spirit is proud. She will suffer long in silence. I do not permit myself to hope.

DELAMERE: You were satisfied to part with her?

MILWARD: Only on condition that she could be happier elsewhere. My poverty was a crime in her eyes. Legitimate reverses, such as occur even to the moneyed giants who wield the scepter over world-wide trade and finance, did not excuse the unpardonable fault through which she was condemned to suffer with me. She was unhappy. Whether my conduct justified her despondence I cannot say. It is not given to man to estimate his capacity to inflict pain or confer pleasure upon those around him. Asking to be released, I granted her request because I wished to place no

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obstacle in the path of her happiness. May her hopes not prove elusive! Yet I feel that but one road ever leads to pure, lasting happiness, and that is—duty!

DELAMERE: Do you know where she has gone?

MILWARD: She is doubtless in New York.

DELAMERE: The goal of every woman who seeks pleasure and is willing to pay the price for it. She, too, will pay the price, or I am no judge of womankind.

MILWARD: You mean—

DELAMERE: Precisely. She is sister to all women. Not one but finds love an easy and alluring highway. Once traveled, no chart is required to direct the course. She will content herself as others do—by taking another companion.

MILWARD: You wrong my wife and you wrong womankind in speaking as you do. Your practice and your experience with women, I am sorry to say, lend weight to much you would say of them, but I will not accept a sweeping libel against the sex.

DELAMERE: Don't be offended, my dear fellow. You are a sentimental—*or worse*, an ascetic. You delight in seclusion. I am a social animal.

MILWARD: A voluptuary.

DELAMERE: As you will. You prefer to reach

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your ideal by self-deception. My plan is to view things as they really are. Plainly, the vaunted virtue of women, so beautiful in the abstract, is a mere concession to the prejudices of moralizers like yourself. My dear fellow, can't you see that the only function of society is to cover bald sexuality? For what other purpose does it exist?

MILWARD: Is society a cloak for immorality?

DELAMERE: No. Calling immoral what nature bids us do by no means makes it so.

MILWARD: Society is woman's shield. Without it she would be the constant prey of licentious and designing men. It protects her modesty——

DELAMERE: There you go again! Modesty! A mere artifice! The modesty of a woman, like the honor of a man, is a beautiful fiction intended to impress the young with the godliness of human nature. It never deceives the man or woman old enough to distinguish a blackbird from a jay.

MILWARD: I am not ignorant of your philosophy. You would overturn all moral standards and in their place set free love.

DELAMERE: I speak for the women—not against them. Can they fall lower than many have done, right in the midst of our so-called civilized communities? Remove conventional restraints, place women upon the same moral foot-

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ing as men, give them absolute liberty—mentally, morally, physically, socially—and before long we should have the grandest type of woman since the days of Eve. It is woman's real emancipation that I advocate. Mark me: it will come! The volcano smolders! Deep rumblings are heard! It labors! It shakes! The fires will burst forth! Then custom and habitudes shall be puffed away! And woman—the new woman—the regenerated woman, radiant in the possession of her God-given equality with her brother, shall take her place, no longer a subject, but the queen of all!

MILWARD: One would indeed think you were woman's champion to hear you talk. Your actions, it is true, bear out your theories, but your theories are most vicious. In practice they would undermine society and make us all slaves to brutal passion.

DELAMERE: In my system divorce would be effectually blotted out—

MILWARD: Yes, as you would blot out everything that interfered with your own sensual gratification.

DELAMERE: Listen. I will bring this question home to you. Look at your own wife. Why did she leave you? Was it because you were poor? I say no! She preferred to risk everything rather

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than remain bound to a man who in her eyes had ceased to be a lover and had become a master! Thousands of wives would do likewise had they the courage to defy the tongue of scandal. Think of a system that permits the husband to revel in the satiety of indiscriminate possession, while the wife must needs stand guard over the so-called honor of both! What chivalry! What justice! Bah! All mockery!

MILWARD: The picture is overdrawn.

DELAMERE: Not at all. But the situation is gradually curing itself. Of course I am doing my best to aid society to recover its health.

MILWARD: If society has indeed reached the stage where the services of physicians like yourself are required, I fear the patient is beyond recovery.

DELAMERE: Ha! ha! ha! Keep your opinion, Frank. We shall not quarrel about it. But for Heaven's sake don't forever shut yourself up here and forget the great gay world on the outside. Go out and enjoy yourself. Your wife will do it. Follow her example.

MILWARD: When a man has spent his whole life in study, what boots it to mingle with the world?

DELAMERE: His whole life! Ha! ha! ha!

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You talk like a centenarian! Thirty-three and a confirmed anchorite! All right, my boy! Mum-mify yourself if you will! Now to business. We must have more money

MILWARD: Much?

DELAMERE: Monks seems to think that two thousand dollars invested at this time will make our fortune.

MILWARD: Then my fortune is doomed. I haven't a penny. Placed a mortgage on this house for twenty-five hundred dollars—all it would stand—to give to my wife. Nothing left.

DELAMERE: Same here. My luck has been execrable of late. Credit strained to the cracking-point at my banker's and my publishers dishonoring insignificant drafts—a mere flea-bite in my general scheme of expense. Stocks wabbling in the most damnably uncertain fashion just as I had planned a grand *coup*—bills here and bills there and creditors dogging my steps clamorous for money! It's a delightful situation! What's to be done?

MILWARD: Wait—yes! I will write to my father. Perhaps I can make a loan from him.

DELAMERE: Good! The game is not yet lost. In the meantime I will see what can be done in

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New York. (*Looks at watch.*) Quarter of four. Train at four. Well, I'm going.

MILWARD: Wait a moment. (*Gets letter from desk and hands to DELAMERE.*) It came a week ago. I have not answered it.

DELAMERE (*reading*): "Mr. Milward—Dear Sir: Will you oblige me with the present address of your friend Mr. George Stanley? I have an important communication to make to him, and shall esteem it a favor if you will at your earliest pleasure comply with this request. Believe me, most sincerely yours, Mrs. Hattie Ellison." All on account of May. Sweet girl, May. She loves me. But what can I do for her? It is out of the question to marry her. Besides, I have a wife already. Bigamy places a man in a deucedly awkward—not to say uncomfortable—position. In fact, it may place a man where there are any number of bars, but no assortment of drinks. Excuse the joke—a ghastly one, but good. Tell her mother I'm dead. No, say I have gone West again—won't be back for a year. Now to catch my train. Good-by. (*Exit.*)

(MILWARD stands looking after his friend for a few moments, shakes his head sadly, walks to desk, gazes earnestly at picture of his wife, takes it up, kisses it, places it in drawer of desk, then seats

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himself dejectedly in chair and loses himself in thought. Little VIOLET enters softly, walks toward her father, and lays her hand on his bowed head.)

VIOLET: Are you not well, papa?

MILWARD: Not ill, my darling. Papa is serious. You shall drive away his gloom. Ah, how could I live without my little angel!

VIOLET: Dear papa, you must not work so hard. When your face looks so sad I know you are tired. You must stop writing now! (*Goes to table and closes books.*) There, rest yourself. I wish I could help you, papa.

MILWARD: Yes, but my little girl is too small to work.

VIOLET: Then when I grow up I will help you.

MILWARD: I pray the day will not come too soon.

VIOLET: Why, papa?

MILWARD: Because you might wish to leave me, like—like—

VIOLET: Oh, no, dear papa! I would never leave you! I love you too much! (*Kisses him.*)

MILWARD: Ah! some day—some day! Who can tell?

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VIOLET: Why, papa, you are crying! Let me wipe the tears away. (*Takes his handkerchief.*) There, you look nice again!

MILWARD: God bless you, my child!

VIOLET: Papa, when is mamma coming home? I think she has been gone *such* a long time. Tell her to come back quick to her little darling. Why, what's become of mamma's picture? It used to be right there (*pointing*).

MILWARD: Yes—yes. I put it away, darling. The frame was much worn. I must buy a new one.

VIOLET: Well, don't forget it, dear papa. (*listens.*) I hear nurse coming. It's time for my nap. (*A knock.*) I'm coming, Edna. (*Kisses him affectionately.*) That's a real American kiss, papa. (*Runs out door.*)

(*A knock at door.* MILWARD opens door.)

Enter MRS. ELLISON and MAY.

MRS. ELLISON: I am Mrs. Ellison.

MAY (*timidly*): My mother, Mr. Milward.

MILWARD: Be seated, ladies. (*Places chairs.*)

MRS. ELLISON: Thank you. Is Mr. Stanley here?

MILWARD: He is not, madam.

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MRS. ELLISON: Not here?

MILWARD: No.

MRS. ELLISON: He left New York this morning. He is here now. (*Rising.*)

MILWARD: Madam, Mr. Stanley *was* here. He has returned to the city. Thence he goes West.

MRS. ELLISON: To what part?

MILWARD: That I cannot tell you. He travels much when away from the city.

MRS. ELLISON: Mr. Milward, I do not forget that you are his friend. You seek to shield him. But he shall not escape me! You do a vile wrong, sir, in aiding him to avoid me!

MILWARD: You do a wrong, madam, in accusing me. I assure you I have no desire to deceive you.

MRS. ELLISON: You received my letter?

MILWARD: I did.

MRS. ELLISON: But you failed to reply.

MILWARD: Because I could not give you the information requested. I myself knew nothing of Mr. Stanley's whereabouts at the time you wrote. He came to-day without foreknowledge on my part.

MRS. ELLISON: Then, sir, I beg your pardon. I was hasty. (*Seats herself.*) You met my daughter three months ago, did you not?

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MILWARD: Yes.

MRS. ELLISON: Will you kindly state the circumstances?

MILWARD: They are simple. I was called to New York to confer with Mr. Stanley regarding a business matter. Going to his hotel, I found your daughter there with him. I spoke a few words to her during his momentary absence from the room, after which he and I left the hotel together. I have not seen her since until she entered this house.

MRS. ELLISON: He has wronged my daughter! He must marry her!

MILWARD: I regret to say it, he is already married.

MRS. ELLISON: Married! (*MAY utters a sharp cry.*)

MILWARD: It is best you know the truth at once.

MRS. ELLISON: Married! Scoundrel! Villain! Wretch! Oh! he shall pay for this! Coward! Blackguard! Come, girl! Let us go! Thank Heaven you have a brother, child! Let him attend to the vile scamp! Come! Good-day, sir. (*Both exit.*)

MILWARD: Thus my friend pursues his pleasures. My friend—my friend! The wrecker of in-

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nocent lives! The despoiler of homes! The traducer of womanhood! My friend! God! what a thought! No, no! It shall never be! His path and mine lie far apart! True I must be to myself, to honor, to Him who gave me breath! O man! O man! Of what clay art thou? Thy God-like gifts in contempt, thy higher destiny ignored! The soul of a Plato curbed by the passions of a Sybarite! Thy head reaching the stars; thy feet incumbered with earthly mire! Strange duality, whose power even I could never fathom! But the spell is broken! All is over! We shall not meet again. For four years I have countenanced these things—for four years our friendship has known no jar! Now—at once—the end! It is best! It is best! I shall leave here! The North holds nothing for me now! Wife, wealth, friend—all—all gone! Why struggle longer? There (*apostrophizing a painting on the wall*)—there they wait for me—there in that tranquil home where I was born in the sunny South! A haven for my darling child, who, motherless, needs the constant care of tender hearts and hands. Yes, I will go! This turmoil over I may find rest—rest! (*Throws himself in chair as scene closes in.*)

END OF SCENE 1.

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Scene 2. A Street.

Enter WIDDESTON, meeting BAGSBY.

WIDDESTON: Hello, Bagsby! Got your telegram this morning. So nothing came of your trip?

BAGSBY: Nothing. Just going to see you. Give it up as a bad job. Went to Denver, Leadville, the Creek,—everywhere. No good. Same as before. Thought I had a clew—mistake. Boy's dead, sure. P'raps years. Killed in fight, I guess. Rough lot. Man's life worth nothing. Huh! thought I'd get it myself once. Fellow—big miner—said drink. Didn't think. Said no. Phew! Pulled on me. Dodged in time. Bullet skinned here. Close shave.

WIDDESTON: Lucky miss, Bagsby. Glad you got back alive. We have done our best. Further effort and expense may as well be spared. It grieves me to return empty-handed to the Duke. But I see no other way. You think of nothing left undone? (BAGSBY *shakes his head.*) Then get your traps together. A steamer leaves, I believe, Saturday. This is Wednesday. Reserve passage for two, Bagsby. (BAGSBY *turns to go.*)

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No! Wait a moment. Don't be in a hurry about the steamer tickets. A little matter has just occurred to me. I will send final instructions to you at the St. George before noon to-morrow. (*Exit BAGSBY.*) Nothing to be gained by being precipitate. It's true I can't stay here forever, but—but something must be done. Ah! she holds me here with bands of steel, yet how little she realizes that my heart is in her keeping. Pearl—Pearl! What will she say? Ah! momentous question—upon which for me depends either happiness or misery! (*Exit.*)

END OF SCENE 2.

Scene 3. Same as Act I.

Enter PEARL.

PEARL: The Count's not a bit nice—there! How does he *know* I fancy him? Ridiculous! What an egotistical creature! He must be a perfect simpleton to tell mamma such a thing! In the house but twenty-four hours and already convinced that I may be had for the asking! Well,

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we shall see, Monsieur Count! (*Seats herself.*) Oh, dear! this marriage question! How it is ding-donged into the ears of poor little unfortunates like myself! I wish it were all over! But why can't we be let alone to do our own choosing? I am sure I am old enough. Gracious! I am two months over eighteen! One doesn't have to be as old as a patriarch to know whether one is in love or not. Mamma says, however, that I am *entirely* too young to know what the sweet little word means; only mamma never called it sweet—she's too unsentimental for that! Perhaps I know more about it than dear old mamma gives me credit for—at least, I am sure I know much more than I did yesterday—before I spoke with Mrs. Lester. Just think! Some day, perhaps, a grand, noble, true-hearted man will tell his love to me—will say he loves me better than all the world—worships the very ground I walk on—will die if his love is not returned—will—oh, dear! how like a beautiful romance it all sounds! Almost too good to be true! Ah! but my knight shall be one of nature's noblemen or I will not listen to him, and he shall love truly, fervently, eternally! When he comes—when my knight comes—when—oh! (*Rises abruptly.*)

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Enter WIDDESTON.

WIDDESTON: Pardon my intrusion. I have come, Miss Pearl, to say—to say—the—the news, I know, will have no interest for you—but—but—

PEARL (*aside*): Gracious! Is he going to propose?

WIDDESTON: I cannot go away without expressing how much I regret the parting with my—my—dear—little—friend!

PEARL: Oh! Is—is that all?

WIDDESTON: All? Why, I—I—what else can I say, Miss Pearl?

PEARL: I don't know. Won't you be seated, Mr. Widdeston? (*They sit.*)

WIDDESTON: Thank you. My mission in America being now finally completed, there is nothing to keep me here.

PEARL: Nothing?

WIDDESTON: That is—of course—I mean—there is nothing to keep me here so far as business is concerned. I could be happy if—but my affairs are finished—and I—I cannot stay longer.

PEARL: You have made up your mind very suddenly, Mr. Widdeston, have you not?

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WIDDESTON: Some news received to-day decided me. I have now been away from England nearly four years. To return is disappointing for two reasons. First, my mission has been unsuccessful, and, second, I deeply regret to part from those friends in this house whom I have learned to esteem so highly.

PEARL: It is kind of you to say that. Mamma and I will miss you greatly, Mr. Widdeston. We shall not soon forget the courtesy and attention you have bestowed upon us.

WIDDESTON: Ah, would it had been a thousandfold more! Then—you—I should say—the—the—Miss Pearl, the pleasant—yea, happy hours passed here will never be effaced from my memory. But, as I mentioned before, I must go. It is all settled. The steamer leaves Saturday. Our destinies seem widely separated. The broad ocean will soon divide us.

PEARL: And will you never come back?

WIDDESTON: I fear not. Dear are the associations of one's youth. In England I was born and reared. I am no longer young. It is my hope to pass the years that yet remain to me in the dear home where I first saw the light.

PEARL: You really mean to bid us good-by forever?

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WIDDESTON: I wish it were in my power to say nay to your question, but ah, Miss Pearl——

PEARL: Then—then, Mr. Widdeston, I'm very sorry. (*Rises abruptly and leaves the room.*)

WIDDESTON (*staring in amazement*): What is the meaning of that? Can she—is it possible? Am I dreaming? Can she really care for me? Preposterous! I am an idiot! My conceit is beyond belief! That radiant creature love me? Ha! ha! ha! I am in my dotage! Love me! Do the stars twinkle for the worm? Are the raptures of Paradise still reserved for mortals? No! no! This is folly! To dwell upon this hope were but to increase the blow that dooms me to despair! Yet I must know whether I am to live or die! I will stay a month—a year—a century to learn my fate! (*Exit.*)

Enter DOROTHY and VON GUTTENBERG.

DOROTHY: Remember, Mr. Von Guttenberg, you must follow my instructions to the letter, on pain of excommunication. Do you understand?

VON GUTTENBERG: Ex-com-mu-ni-ca-tion. That word not—but I know you will a joke make with Mrs. Lester——

DOROTHY: Hush! Listen. She will be down

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in a moment. Mr. Seabury came in five minutes ago. He's in the right mood—so. (*Simulating mild tipsiness.*) He admires her tremendously—who doesn't? I told him yesterday I thought Ade-lade was again pining for a protector—that sin-gle blessedness did not seem to agree with her. I wish you could have seen the expression on Mr. Seabury's face! Well, the time is ripe. Now, sir! Can I rely upon you?

VON GUTTENBERG: I will my best do. But when Mrs. Lester shall find out—

DOROTHY: Don't worry. She will not blame you. Her wrath will vent itself alone on my de-voted head. I take the whole responsibility. Now, for goodness sake don't spoil our cute little com-edy through nervousness.

VON GUTTENBERG: Ach! I in the German army have served. One soldier—two—ten—fifty could I fight—ah, Miss Dorothy, better than one American lady I can stand before when she shall scold.

DOROTHY: Don't be afraid. She won't eat you. There's my hand. I promise faithfully to shield you, no matter what happens. Find Mr. Seabury. Watch this door until you see me pass out. Then tell him that Mrs. Lester desires a confidential word with him in the parlor. I will await you in

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the corridor. (*As VON GUTTENBERG turns to go out ADELAIDE enters.*) See that the band-box is handled carefully, Mr. Von Guttenberg, and be sure not to forget the mackintosh.

VON GUTTENBERG: Yes, Miss Dorothy. (*Hurries out.*)

ADELAIDE: Band-box! Mackintosh! Haven't you forgotten something? I sadly fear, Dorothy, that ere you have done with him your handsome cavalier will degenerate into a veritable "buttons."

DOROTHY: Nothing like keeping the men occupied. It is the only way to satisfy one's self that they are out of mischief.

ADELAIDE (*laughing*): Out of mischief! Dorothy Deming in a new *rôle*—conserver of man's welfare and self-constituted protector of his morals and manners! Ha! ha! ha! Poor Mr. Von Guttenberg! Nothing less than a German "baron" would answer for your first experiment in the art of man-government! Band-boxes, and mackintoshes, and doubtless goloshes, and extra curls, and hair-pins, and corset laces, and oh! the thousand-and-one things that are included in the impedimenta of a successful soubrette! What a vista of usefulness for a dignified gentleman! Come, now, aren't you ashamed of yourself?

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DOROTHY: Well, he dearly loves to do my errands. And really, I never overburden him. He has served in the German army and knows what hard work is. I simply keep him in practice. But, dear me! I had forgotten. Wait here till I return. Something very important. (*Hurries out.*)

ADELAIDE: Something very important! What can it be? A letter from the manager, perhaps. Good news, I'm sure. Just like Dorothy to leave it to the last moment. I hope she will hurry.

Enter SEABURY.

SEABURY: Ah, Mrs. Lester, this auspicious opportunity has heretofore seemed immeasurably remote. I felicitate. (*Looking around.*) Is the seclusion sufficient?

ADELAIDE: For what, pray? (*Aside.*) Now, if Dorothy would only come!

SEABURY: Eavesdroppers are known to ply their vocation at most unseasonable periods. It is wise to always endeavor to circumvent their machinations. Therefore—but no matter. Madam, I am your most humble servant. You have conferred honor upon Thaddeus Seabury—such honor, to quote the words of the immortal Shakespeare, “as age cannot stale or custom wither!” Fine poet, Shakespeare.

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ADELAIDE (*aside*): What is the man talking about?

SEABURY: Not to resume where we terminated at our last colloquy, the matter now under advisement being singularly removed from the crass insipidity which often distinguishes ordinary subjects—it is still, perhaps, unnecessary and superfluous to enter into detailed expression of those ardent sentiments which permeate my being and dominate my sentient organism. Nevertheless, having feared my inability at the crucial period to adequately extemporize, I propitiously took occasion to formulate what shall be historically designated as my—my— (*fumbling in pockets*) (*aside*:) Bless my soul! What have I done with my declaration? Not the Declaration of Independence! No, far from it! The declaration of servitude—of subjugation to the weaker vessel; for am I not a slave to lovely woman's charms?

ADELAIDE: You have lost something? (*Aside*:) Why doesn't that girl come?

SEABURY: Regretfully I announce that the declaration seems to have miscarried. (*Aside*:) Mutton-head! The exigency must be bridged over by extemporaneous eloquence. An irreparable oversight not to have committed to memory those portentous lines which spoke in thunder tones of the

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love of Thaddeus Seabury. Ah, the exordium flashes across my mind! Let the subject furnish inspiration! (*Aloud:*) When in the course of human events—

ADELAIDE: Dear me! You were talking politics all the time! How stupid in me, to be sure!

SEABURY: When in the course of human—no; I am wrong.

ADELAIDE: No, you are correct, Mr. Seabury. The Declaration begins—

SEABURY: Not mine—not mine! Mine has nothing in common with the immortal document which stands so conspicuously for American liberty and American institutions! In those mighty days when the foundation—no! Where was I? Oh, yes! I return to the original subject. When lovely woman sits in pensive loneliness amid the uproarious gayeties which mark this mighty metropolis, when she languishes while jollity reigns supreme and merry laughter peals upward to the beaming skies, it becomes the proud and happy prerogative of man to alleviate her woe, to assuage her grief, to soothe her sufferings, to transmit comfort and consolation and sympathy—in fact, to rear a beautiful oasis where formerly bloomed a desert of despair. (*Aside:*) Elegant figure of speech that! (*Aloud:*) I beg of you, beauteous

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madam, to scrutinize me. You behold a man who, though not absolutely untainted by the vices of his fellows, is yet endowed with a multitude of unexceptionable attributes which recommend and indorse him. A man too humble to profess perfection, yet conscious of conceded superiority in comparison with all competitors. A man, madam, not of boastful propensities nor given to sounding his own praises, yet who, in the exigencies of politics, war, business, or love, may be depended upon not only to fulfill supremest expectations, but to infinitely surpass them. A man, my dear madam, whose inmost nature sympathizes with the yearnings of the weaker sex, and whose soul longs to unite with a kindred one and together sing the joyous song of love! Love, my dear Mrs. Lester! What does the poet say about love?

ADELAIDE: Love, Mr. Seabury! (*Aside:*) I shall positively go distracted unless Dorothy returns at once!

SEABURY: Ah! You understand—inconsolable—single blessedness—

ADELAIDE: Explain yourself, Mr. Seabury. I am at a loss to know what this all means.

SEABURY: The inexpressible sentiments which have gained a foothold within the confines of a

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heart only too susceptible to the influence of lovely woman——

ADELAIDE: Sentiments for whom?

SEABURY: Ah! Who of all the beauteous bevy that irradiates our existence could inspire such tender emotions, such tremulous ebullitions, such tumultuous outpourings, but the beautiful Mrs. Lester? Thus I stoop to render homage and——
(Falls on knees and seizes her hand as DOROTHY enters.) Oh! (Groans and scrambles to his feet.)

DOROTHY: Oh! I intrude. (*Turns as if to go.*) Don't let me disturb you.

ADELAIDE: No, don't go, Dorothy. Mr. Seabury is going. (*Aside:*) For Heaven's sake don't leave me alone.

SEABURY: Verily I *am* about to perambulate. The season is inauspicious for further discussion of the subject-matter at issue. At your convenience, madam, I shall be happy to resume where we are now constrained to terminate. Adieu, dear madam, adieu! (*Exit.*)

DOROTHY: Ha! ha! ha! I saw it all—from the very beginning! Oh, dear! Oh, dear! Wasn't it delicious! Why, the man's positively in love with you!

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ADELAIDE: You saw it all! Something very important, indeed, that took you away so nimbly! Do you know, I half suspect that you were the instigator of this little scene. Come, confess, madcap!

DOROTHY: Guilty! I throw myself on the mercy of the court! Pass sentence. I am ready. Ha! ha! ha! But really, Adelaide, you and Mr. Seabury did look supremely ridiculous! I wish you could have seen yourself! A symposium of love with trimmings! How we did enjoy it!

ADELAIDE: We! So you had a confederate! Oh, don't tell me! I know! And his name is Mr. Carl Von Guttenberg. Leave it to Dorothy Deming to keep him out of mischief! She will find work for willing hands. The idea of your taking advantage of that kind, innocent, confiding German gentleman! Now, listen. I will forgive you both—on one condition.

(VON GUTTENBERG *shows himself at door several times, but fears to approach.*)

DOROTHY: Make it easy.

ADELAIDE: Tell me instantly about your important news.

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DOROTHY: Done. Maud Somerville retires from the company in three weeks and you are to take her place. I have the manager's note in my room.

ADELAIDE: Isn't that lovely! (*Kisses Dorothy impulsively.*) Oh, you dear, kind girl, how can I thank you!

DOROTHY: Don't. Thank yourself. Your own ability wins you the place.

ADELAIDE: Dorothy dear, I tremble lest I fail.

DOROTHY: Fail! In the bright lexicon of youth—you know the rest. You can't fail. Let me look at you. Why, you're a picture! Young, witty, beautiful—

ADELAIDE: Hush, Dorothy.

DOROTHY: Talented, self-possessed, and perfectly *comme il faut*, as the Count would say.

ADELAIDE: If the public will but wear your glasses, Dorothy, when I am under its critical scrutiny, my success is assured. I fear me, however, that an admission fee is a harsh judge not disposed to go to school with those who seek his favor.

DOROTHY: Never mind! You shall see that I am right. I think I know what the public wants. (*VON GUTTENBERG appears at door, hesitating whether to enter.*) Come in, Mr. Von Gutten-

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berg. All is forgiven. By the way, "baron," may I ask another favor of you?

VON GUTTENBERG: Certainly, yes, Miss Dorothy. (*Looking askance at ADELAIDE.*) But no jokes any more with fine American ladies!

DOROTHY: Honestly, no. Put him out of his misery, Adelaide.

ADELAIDE: There, "baron," is my hand. The culprit has confessed. You are entirely exonerated.

VON GUTTENBERG: Ah, happy I now am. It to me much grief would give to offend the American ladies. My many thanks I now say to you, Mrs. Lester, and hope to always be friends with you and Miss Dorothy.

ADELAIDE: Your friendship, Mr. Von Guttenberg, is highly valued.

DOROTHY: Let me tell the "baron" the good news. Adelaide joins our company and makes her *début* next month.

VON GUTTENBERG: Indeed! I to hear it am glad. Mrs. Lester will surely in her art become famous.

DOROTHY: There! He coincides with me.

ADELAIDE: Your words, Mr. Von Guttenberg, are most complimentary. But between obscurity

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and fame yawns a wide gulf. It is not bridged in a day.

VON GUTTENBERG: That I know. But you will succeed, Mrs. Lester, when anything you try to do.

DOROTHY: Now, "baron," get yourself ready. I need you.

(DOROTHY and VON GUTTENBERG turn to go as DELAMERE enters.)

ADELAIDE (*aside*:) Mr. Delamere returned already! What has happened?

DELAMERE: Ah, ladies, I am glad to see you. Mr. Von Guttenberg, let me thank you for the assistance rendered at our musicale last night.

(VON GUTTENBERG bows slightly.)

DOROTHY: Excuse me, Mr. Delamere. I must go, Adelaide. Baron, march!

VON GUTTENBERG goes out, followed by DOROTHY.)

ADELAIDE: Have you——

DELAMERE: Yes. I saw him. Frank is the same as usual. Less optimistic, perhaps, but otherwise unchanged.

ADELAIDE: Did he—he——

DELAMERE: Speak of you? Yes, quite freely. He is fully resigned to the separation.

ADELAIDE: He told you that?

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DELAMERE: Not exactly in those words. The import was the same. He is one of those rare individuals who can always make a virtue of necessity. He recognizes his inability to provide for you the comforts to which you have been accustomed.

ADELAIDE: And my child—did you see her?

DELAMERE: No. Frank spoke of her—said all was sunshine with her by his side.

ADELAIDE: Yes! He has compensations! My absence is nothing! To be rid of a wife's obnoxious presence and still retain his daughter and his books fills the measure of his desires.

DELAMERE: His theories absorb him. Frank missed his vocation. He is the ideal pulpитеer.

ADELAIDE: So I learned, to my sorrow. He selected me as the incarnation of that evil thing called sin, and in the absence of a congregation on my head alone poured the vials of his wrathful eloquence!

DELAMERE: A splendid fellow, but a dreamer! If successful, this mining venture will prove a great boon to him. It will enable him to begin a practical crusade for the regeneration of the human race. At present the chances look doubtful. We lack funds.

ADELAIDE: Is the amount large?

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DELAMERE: Comparatively a mere bagatelle—two thousand dollars; but—

ADELAIDE: Two thousand dollars! (*Sits at table and writes check.*) There is an order for the amount. It is the remainder of the money he gave me. I gladly return it to him. May it bring fortune to you both.

DELAMERE: A generous deed, Adelaide—creditable alike to your heart and head. On my part, a thousand thanks for your kindness. I presume it is your intention to keep him in ignorance of the source of this contribution?

ADELAIDE: Yes. I prefer it.

DELAMERE: You wish a receipt?

ADELAIDE: If I do not trouble you.

DELAMERE (*sits at table*): In your name?

ADELAIDE (*slowly*): No—in his.

DELAMERE (*after writing*): There! (*Hands receipt.*) Perhaps this (*holding up check*) presages future affluence for us all!

ADELAIDE: For your sake and his I truly hope so.

DELAMERE: And for yours I pray that the yield from our Arizona property will put to shame even the fabled Pactolean sands. Is there nothing I can do for you?

ADELAIDE: Nothing—at present.

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DELAMERE: Then, with your permission, I will take my leave. I shall go direct to Arizona by the first train. Command me upon my return. Adieu. (*Exit.*)

ADELAIDE: My conscience is now unburdened. Let the money be devoted to the rehabilitation of his fortune. I do not need it. The promise of future comforts for my darling child is infinite repayment for the momentary sacrifice. God grant the venture may prove successful. (*Seats herself and looks at receipt.*) The Earl Charles mine! A princely title! It suggests——

Enter WIDDESTON.

WIDDESTON: Mrs. Lester, may I break in upon your reveries just for one moment?

ADELAIDE: Certainly, Mr. Widdeston. I may have a word to say to you in return. (*He takes seat near her.*)

WIDDESTON: I wish, Mrs. Lester, to consult you on a very delicate matter. In fact, I know not how to approach it.

ADELAIDE: There must be a beginning, Mr. Widdeston.

WIDDESTON: True. But this matter is so—so different from the topics heretofore discussed that

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you will—be—be amazed when you learn its pur-port.

ADELAIDE: Why, you interest me, Mr. Widdeston.

WIDDESTON: Until an hour ago it was my firm determination to take passage for Liverpool Saturday.

ADELAIDE: Indeed! And something induced you to alter your plans—is that it, Mr. Widdes-ton?

WIDDESTON: Exactly! How did you know?

ADELAIDE: Believe me, Mr. Widdeston, not through psychic communication. A fortunate guess. Please continue.

WIDDESTON: First, I must tell you how much I admire your sweet friend, Miss Pearl Westholme. I say admire, but it—it is not that. It is love. It—

ADELAIDE: I am delighted to hear it!

WIDDESTON: You—you are?

ADELAIDE: Yes, exceedingly so. But go on, please.

WIDDESTON: I love her. Being ignorant of my passion, as I thought, her demeanor when I acquainted her with my resolve to quit America was inexplicable. It roused a hope that—perhaps—she—loved me in return. (*Rises.*) A foolish

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thought! A groundless hope! But they urge me to persevere until my fate is known. Tell me, can I approach her—can I, without violence to her heavenly innocence, make known the cherished hopes that fill my heart?

ADELAIDE: To leave unsaid a love that ennobles you and honors its object were to do a two-fold injury. The love of an honorable man is too valuable a possession to be lightly regarded, even by the most exalted of our sex. My advice is, acquaint her with your feelings at the first favorable opportunity.

WIDDESTON: I thank you, Mrs. Lester, from the bottom of my heart! Your words decide me!

ADELAIDE: Pearls without price are not to be won every day. They— (*He sits near her.*) Oh, by the way, Mr. Widdeston, what do you know about mining?

WIDDESTON: Mining! A most startling digression! I—to be sure—excuse me, but am I mistaken in my impression that—ahem!—the tender passion was the theme of our discourse?

ADELAIDE: You are quite right, Mr. Widdeston. It *was* the theme. But the subject has been changed—for the present.

WIDDESTON: Ah!

ADELAIDE: Shortly before you entered I made

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an investment in a mining property. My—that is, Mr. Delamere is also interested. He goes at once to Arizona, where this mine, the Earl Charles, is—

WIDDESTON (*jumps up, almost shouting*) : The Earl Charles !

ADELAIDE: Why, yes. You seem surprised. Are you acquainted—

WIDDESTON: The Earl Charles mine ! The Earl Charles ! (*Dashes to table, seizes pen, writes message, and rings bell.*) The Earl Charles mine !

Enter bell-boy.

Here ! Quick ! Get that off to J. B. Bagsby, Hotel St. George, without a moment's delay ! Go ! Good ! A clew ! A clew at last !

ADELAIDE: The man has surely lost his reason !

QUICK CURTAIN.

END OF ACT II.

ACT III.

One month is supposed to elapse between Acts II. and III.

Scene 1. FRANK MILWARD'S study. Same as Act II., Scene 1. The room is bare except for packed trunk at one side and box ready for shipping at the other.

MILWARD enters, with letters in his hand.

MILWARD (*looking at letter*): From father. I know its contents ere I open it. He welcomes me back from my self-imposed banishment to that quiet home in the South which I left so full of confidence ten years ago. So ends my dream of fame! George Stanley's hand! What has he to say? (*Tears edge of envelope, then pauses.*) No! Is he not dead to me? Why resurrect his memory?

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Why renew even in thought a connection now sun-
dered forever? (*Tears letter into bits and throws
on floor. Takes third letter.*) What's this?
Postmarked New York, October 16. Decidedly
foreign hand. Who is it? (*Opens letter and
reads:*) "Mr. Frank Milward, Albany, N. Y.—
Dear Sir: I will your pardon already ask for the
address to you by one a stranger of this letter. By
accident it to me has been discovered who your
wife is. A bad friend is around her—a man.
Many things which I have seen and heard she does
not know anything about. I have thought that it
would be good if you did know what was going on.
So this letter I write. When you shall more want
to know I will meet you at Fifth Avenue Hotel
Monday night next week at nine o'clock. I will to
you be known by boutonnière of violets in coat
lapel and will by the office stand. My bad English
I ask you to excuse, as I cannot yet well write.
Yours in respect, Carl Von Guttenberg." What
am I to think of that? A decoy letter—a pretext
on Adelaide's part to discover if I am prepared to
resume relations with her—or is she already under
the influence of some courtly reprobate who will
flatter her to her ruin? Society has many such
whose sole pastime is the defilement of women.
(*Looking at letter.*) "A bad friend around her."

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Those words ring true. Sincerity is stamped in their very style—plain, homely, honest. “Monday night.” That’s to-night. I have just time enough to catch a train that reaches the city at eight. The matter is worth exploring if only to satisfy myself that she is well—if not happy.

Enter VIOLET.

(*He takes her in his arms.*) Papa must leave you again, darling—at once.

VIOLET: Dear, kind papa, won’t you take me?

MILWARD: Not now, love. Soon we shall go together on a long and pleasant trip. So be patient. Run and tell nurse I wish to see her.

VIOLET: Yes, dear papa. (*Exit.*)

MILWARD: A few hours at most and all will be clear to me. Can she really be threatened? Or is it some prying Paul who idly seeks to dabble in the affairs of others? Whatever it be, my poor Adelaide, to expose yourself to risk were needless. Here you were safe. To ward off harm from you, the husband you despised would willingly have interposed his own life. (*Exit.*)

END OF SCENE 1.

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Scene 2. Parlors of the Hotel Glenalvon. Same as Act I.

Enter WIDDESTON.

WIDDESTON: Now, if Bagsby has made a good job of this matter there is reason to believe that this mystery will be finally cleared up. What possible connection, if any, could Delamere have had with the Earl? It is more than a mere coincidence that a mine has been named after the Earl. Strange! very strange! And Mrs. Lester, who knows absolutely nothing of the property, is induced by Mr. Delamere to invest a cold two thousand dollars! A still more remarkable fact! Well, I look to Bagsby to throw light on these peculiar transactions.

Enter BAGSBY.

Ah, Bagsby! Good! Now your story, quick!

BAGSBY: Arizona O. K. Found the mine. Apache County. Disguised myself as miner. Saw 'em both. Delamere and Monks. Monks is the engineer. Showed me through mine. Great. Barrels of gold. Had talk with Delamere. Mine once called the Montreal lode. Afterward changed to Earl Charles. Said I, "Why?" Said he, "Memory of friend."

WIDDESTON: Did he say that?

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BAGSBY: Right he did. I kept pumping. Careless like. "Englishman?" said I. "Oh, yes! Real Earl," says he. "Dead many years, but his name lives."

WIDDESTON: He told you the Earl was dead? Great gods! Bagsby, could he—go on! go on!

BAGSBY: Delamere says accident. Says Earl's rifle fell. Shot himself. That's all from Delamere. Waited till he left. Talked to Monks. No different. Found out man in Albany owns part of mine.

WIDDESTON: And his name?

BAGSBY: Milward—Frank Milward.

WIDDESTON: Good! Now get away to Albany by the first train. Find Milward. Learn all you can from him. We are on the right scent at last, Bagsby. Don't delay. Come back here the instant you are through with Milward. (*Exit BAGSBY.*) So they were friends! The Earl and Delamere! Perhaps the story is true. It is possible that the Earl was killed by accident. Delamere will be here to-day. I shall sound him. I shall draw him out. If he speaks frankly, further secrecy on my part will be unnecessary. I will then acquaint him with my mission here. The Earl is dead—as I anticipated. It is a doleful

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truth, yet far to be preferred to harrowing uncertainty. (*Exit.*)

Enter ADELAIDE and DOROTHY.

DOROTHY: The final rehearsal went off "pat." You object to slang, I know, Adelaide, but a little of it now and then is relished by the best of men—and soubrettes. You carried off the honors, just as I said.

ADELAIDE: Wait till the verdict of to-night. The crucial test is still to come.

DOROTHY: Are you nervous?

ADELAIDE: Not physically. But so much depends on my success that I may be pardoned if I have misgivings.

DOROTHY: The part fits you like a glove. There's the advantage of being a married woman. Your lessons of life are worth something to you now.

ADELAIDE: Would to Heaven, Dorothy, I could exchange them all for a few that are necessary in my new career! Alas! the baser metal cannot be transmuted into glittering gold! I do not deceive myself, Dorothy. I must stand or fall purely on my merits.

DOROTHY: Oh, don't be so serious. You give

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me the “blues.” Why, my dear Adelaide, you will have everything your own way. Your beauty, talent, style—

ADELAIDE: Come, come, Dorothy, no flattery.

DOROTHY: It is not flattery. You know you are beautiful. Listen while I whisper a secret into your ear. Beauty always wins the battle in public. Now, you also have talent. Talent is glorious. Put beauty and talent together, and nothing can resist the combination. There you are!

ADELAIDE (*laughing*): Your enthusiasm is contagious. I have caught some of it. Surely I cannot fail after all my hard work?

DOROTHY: Never!

Enter VON GUTTENBERG.

Oh, “baron,” I want you! Another commission. Have you seen the Count to-day? He promised to buy a box for the performance to-night. The house will be full—but the nobilities particularly must not disappoint us. A French Count, a German Baron—

VON GUTTENBERG: Now, Miss Dorothy, I no baron am.

DOROTHY: Then I will create you one. On your knees, sir, and receive the decree of your im-

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perial sovereign. (*He falls on one knee.*) Worthy knight, you have done our errands well. You have never been known to cavil at our royal commands. You have borne with true knightly dignity the scoldings of your imperial mistress. You have in all things obeyed us. Therefore it is our imperial pleasure to bestow upon the knight at our feet the well-earned title, Baron Carl of Guttenberg and Manhattan. Rise, then, Baron, assume thy new estate, and henceforth be known by the title now conferred. (*He rises.*)

ADELAIDE: Baron—excuse me, Mr. Von Guttenberg, don't let Dorothy's pranks cause you any annoyance. She was born under a merry star. Persiflage is her meat and drink.

VON GUTTENBERG: Could Miss Dorothy German understand, then—then—

DOROTHY: You would retaliate, eh?

VON GUTTENBERG: Yes—ret—t-t-liate. That the word is. In German can I speak quick, fast, but in English, oh, me! I can never the language learn. It too difficult is.

ADELAIDE: Now, Dorothy, never permit yourself to take such liberties with Mr. Von Guttenberg again. It's a shame!

DOROTHY: He is not offended. Are you, "baron?"

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VON GUTTENBERG: Indeed not, Miss Dorothy. When a good joke is, I laugh. (*Laughs.*)

DOROTHY: There! He understands a joke, even if it is in English—or American!

VON GUTTENBERG: Oh, I can understand, Miss Dorothy. The American girls so lively are—so jolly. In Germany the girls—more—more— Ach! what we call *schuchtern*—*schuchternheit*.

ADELAIDE: Diffident, Mr. Von Guttenberg?

DOROTHY: Bashful, perhaps?

VON GUTTENBERG: Yes, that is it—bashful! The German girls more bashful are.

DOROTHY: Which do you like best, “baron?”

VON GUTTENBERG: They are nice both. When we in Germany could have always lively girls like you, Miss Dorothy, it would a different Germany be. Could I English better know, then I could explain exactly what my meaning is. But I two years more shall stay in this country, and I learn—I learn.

DOROTHY: That you will, “baron.”

Enter WIDDESTON.

(DOROTHY and VON GUTTENBERG *retire back.*)

WIDDESTON: Mrs. Lester, do you expect Mr. Delamere to-day?

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ADELAIDE: He promised to call this afternoon.

WIDDESTON: I have just learned that one of the owners of the Earl Charles mine resides in Albany.

ADELAIDE (*quickly*): How did you learn it? Not from Mr. Delamere?

WIDDESTON: No. The information came from another source. You will pardon me if I ask further questions regarding this mine. I have a deep interest in the matter which later shall be explained to you. This owner in Albany—Milward—do you know anything of him?

ADELAIDE: Only through Mr. Delamere. As I told you before, my connection with the mine extends no further than the small sum which I have invested. Mr. Delamere is merely my agent in the transaction. He will surely be here very soon, and doubtless will be glad to enlighten you fully.

(DOROTHY and VON GUTTENBERG approach.)

DOROTHY: You will not disappoint us to-night, Mr. Widdeston?

WIDDESTON: By no means. I assure you I look forward to the event with unmixed pleasure.

(*Turning to Adelaide.*) If Mrs. Lester—

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Enter DELAMERE.

ADELAIDE: Here is Mr. Delamere. (*To DELAMERE:*) I will be ready in ten minutes. Please excuse me, Mr. Widdeston. Come, Dorothy, I must have a final word with you in my room.

(*As they are about to leave the room DOROTHY turns and speaks to VON GUTTENBERG, who is near door.*)

DOROTHY: Baron, can I trouble you to do me a small favor? Come with us. I won't keep you in suspense. (*Exeunt ADELAIDE and DOROTHY, followed by VON GUTTENBERG.*)

WIDDESTON: Mrs. Lester casually mentioned in my presence that through you she had invested some funds in a mining property. Having some idle capital—not a large sum—perhaps I can induce you to interest yourself in my behalf. Should the mine require further capital for development—

DELAMERE: One month ago your offer would have been considered with pleasure. The mine is now paying handsomely. Whether it will continue to do so no one can tell. A mine sometimes plays queer pranks. If matters take a less fortunate turn, I shall then be willing to negotiate with you.

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WIDDESTON: Good. This mine, I believe Mrs. Lester said, is located in Arizona?

DELAMERE: Apache County, Arizona. Rich throughout in gold-bearing quartz.

WIDDESTON: And the name—let me see—is—

DELAMERE: The Earl Charles.

WIDDESTON: Yes, now I remember. Quite English. Named, doubtless, by the original owner—perhaps an Englishman.

DELAMERE: Most likely.

WIDDESTON: You did not know him?

DELAMERE: No. Monks, my engineer, is an Englishman. He is acquainted with the history of the mine, although I am not. At one time it bore the name of the Montreal lode, but was afterward changed to the Earl Charles.

WIDDESTON (*carelessly*): Who was this Earl Charles?

DELAMERE (*starting*): Earl Charles?

WIDDESTON: Yes. You never saw him, I presume?

DELAMERE: Who—I? Why, I don't know that he ever lived. As I understand, the name is purely fanciful.

WIDDESTON: Being an Englishman, the title naturally attracted my attention. It may sound strange, even foolish, but I would risk my money

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quicker in a mine with an English title than in any other, no matter where located. Therefore I hope the Earl Charles may yet gratify my desire for an investment.

DELAMERE: I shall not forget you.

Enter ADELAIDE.

ADELAIDE: I am ready.

DELAMERE: Very well. A good-afternoon to you, Mr. Widdeston. (*ADELAIDE and DELAMERE both exit.*)

WIDDESTON: The cat's out of the bag at last! So he doesn't know that the Earl ever lived! And I marked him change color when I suddenly mentioned the Earl. He has something to conceal! What, unless it be to cover up a crime in which he is implicated? What motive can he have in denying a deed that by his own admission leaves him clear? There is more to this! He is not honest! He fears the truth! He lies glibly! He spoke freely to Bagsby—why not to me? A link is still missing! What is it? Let me see. A young Earl runs away from home, comes to America, and forms an attachment with an adventurous lad of his own age. Together they go West to seek their fortune. Time passes. Boy-

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like, they have sworn eternal fidelity to each other. They will share equally whatever of wealth the great region has in store. The Earl chances to light upon a nugget, and impelled by momentary cupidity, refuses his comrade's demand for a share. They quarrel. In the heat of passion he is killed by his friend, who, stricken with remorse, afterward rears a monument to the dead, in the name of this mine in Arizona—his only expiation! So the sad tale surely runs. Yes, it is clear! Delamere the friend! Delamere the slayer! (*Exit.*)

Enter MRS. WESTHOLME and PEARL.

MRS. WESTHOLME: Tut! tut! my dear. Love is only a relative condition, after all. The Count positively adores you.

PEARL: But I don't adore him! I agree with you, mamma, that he is very nice, but if I cannot love——

MRS. WESTHOLME: Love again! Listen to your mother, Pearl. You are entirely too young to be a judge of your own feelings.

PEARL: Then, mamma, why not let me wait until I am old enough to be a proper judge?

MRS. WESTHOLME: Ah, my love, I might be dead by that time. I want you to be happy while I am alive, so I can enjoy it with you.

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PEARL: You would not enjoy my misery, mamma?

MRS. WESTHOLME: Misery, child? Don't speak foolishly. Such an opportunity as the present will never come again. Do you suppose the Count need look below a multi-millionairess in an American alliance? It is true you have excellent prospects, but your uncle is hale and hearty and may live many years. What your father left has enabled us to live in comfortable style, but it has not sufficed to lift you into the category of eligibles for a French Count. There is where I have exercised diplomacy. Ah, my dear, leave it to the mothers to look after the welfare of their children!

PEARL: Yes, dear mamma, you have done everything to make me happy. And now you are determined to make me miserable. I cannot love the Count—I can never be happy with him.

MRS. WESTHOLME: So long as you have no positive aversion to him you need not fear for the future. He will take good care of your happiness. As a French Countess your time, I hope, will be better occupied than in worrying over these little matters of sentiment. A brilliant marriage for my only daughter has been my dream. I look to you, love, to realize it.

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PEARL: Perhaps I am foolish and stubborn, mamma. I cannot help feeling that to marry without love is a great mistake, even though one does make a brilliant marriage. What is love good for if it doesn't prompt us when we hope the most?

MRS. WESTHOLME: You will reason differently, my dear, after you are married.

PEARL: Besides, dear mamma, it is all so sudden. You know how unprepared I am to make a decision.

MRS. WESTHOLME: That has already been attended to. You have merely to say yes when the Count comes. A little word, easily said, my dear.

PEARL: Easily said, but full of doubt and dread to me.

MRS. WESTHOLME: Think what it brings you! Now, dear, I will leave you. The Count will be soon here. Remember, he has no need to go begging for a wife. Designing people with nothing but money to recommend them are ready to snap him up at any moment. Follow your mother's wishes, and in two weeks you will be the proud and envied Countess Pearl de Lempriere. (*Exit.*)

PEARL: What am I to do? Mamma has set her heart on my marrying the Count, and I haven't the least regard for him—that is, as a future hus-

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band. I don't want to disappoint mamma. She is anxious for my happiness, I know. But I don't care for the Count. Why should I marry him? Oh, dear! Oh, dear! What shall I do? He will be here presently and will expect an answer. Mamma will tell him I am waiting for him. What shall I do? If there were only a way to put it off until—until some one else had a chance to speak first! Oh, dear, how they do harass and torment poor little me! I don't want to get married, and—and—I shall never get married. There!

(*Sits and weeps silently.*)

Enter WIDDESTON.

(*He carries some flowers in his hand. PEARL does not observe his entrance. He quietly places flowers on chair beside her, then softly withdraws.*)

PEARL (*rising*): I am resolved. Come what may, I shall not marry the Count! (*Sees flowers.*) How fresh and fragrant! Who could have left them?

(*WIDDESTON approaches.*)

I have you to thank for these lovely flowers, have I not, Mr. Widdeston?

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WIDDESTON: You honor me by accepting them.

PEARL: I assure you, they are accepted most gratefully. Won't you be seated, Mr. Widdeston? (*She sits at one end of divan and makes room for him.*) I missed you at dinner to-day.

WIDDESTON: You did really miss me?

PEARL: Why, certainly! What a queer question!

WIDDESTON (*speaking rapidly*): No, not a queer question when you know what prompted it. When you know what a word from your lips signifies to me. When you know the bliss that your faintest smile bestows. When you know how I have longed for this moment, to sit near you, to touch your hand, to feel that you would not repel me. Ah, loveliest of mortals! Have your eyes not taught you my heart and its silent, deep devotion? Have I concealed my love so well that it has passed unheeded even as the flower heeds not the bee that sips its sweets? I am unworthy, yet I ask—I ask the priceless possession of your pure young love! Can you—can you—

(*She droops yieldingly as he kisses her hand. Then taking her in his arms he kisses her lips. She suddenly disengages herself and rises.*)

PEARL: Please leave me now. The Count is coming. Mamma intends to send him at once.

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(*He hesitates.*) Do not fear to leave me alone with him. I—you—you are the only one I—I—love! (*He catches her in his arms.*) Now won't you please go? (*WIDDESTON exits.* *She sits and fastens flowers in her bodice, etc.*) Oh, how strange I feel! It seems like a dream! I wonder if it is all true! I wish he would come back—and—and—tell it all over again! I could listen to him forever! Love, and love, and love—oh! I am so happy!

Enter COUNT.

COUNT: Ah, Miss Pearl! (*She rises.*) You are alone. You have waited. I thank you. *Ciel!* Ah, the blue—the blue, like the beautiful sky—it is the perfect complement for your complexion! You are the lily—so fair!

PEARL (*They sit*): Your words are very kind, Count.

COUNT: In my country there is seldom seen the pure blonde. But here in your city I have already seen every type. The American women are beautiful. They have individuality—more, indeed, than is found in those of any other country. I am charmed!

PEARL: It pleases me to think that you have so favorable an opinion of our women. I am sure

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we try to be worthy the regard of every true man in the world.

COUNT: And it is deserved!

PEARL: Speaking of complexions, Count, you are much fairer than many of your countrymen whom I met while in France.

COUNT: Have I not explained? In my blood runs a strain of the Anglo-Saxon. It dates from the fifth Henry. Neither time nor climate has had the power to impair its visible aspect.

PEARL: The fifth Henry! Gracious! Your pedigree is long!

COUNT: We are proud of it. Few in France point to a nobler one.

PEARL: You certainly have good reason to be proud of your ancestry.

COUNT: For five centuries the line has been unbroken. My family was old when Columbus discovered America. It has been identified actively with many of the greatest movements of Europe. My great-grandfather and his brother both came to this country with the Marquis de la Fayette during your war for independence. In our possession is an original account of much which has not yet been published in your histories.

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PEARL: Why, I had no idea, Count, that your family was so distinguished.

COUNT: You are pleased to say it. It is my ardent desire that soon you shall have a closer acquaintance with my family. (*A pause.*) The hope is here—the hope has been since first we met on the Boulevard at Nice. That day—that day—you remember! The rain—how it dashed! The wind—how it surged! The drive at a gallop to the hotel! Ah! it is yesterday! Can you not see, Miss Pearl? I honor you! I love you! At your feet I lay everything—lands, titles—

PEARL: Please—please rise, Count. I, though it deeply grieves me, must speak plainly. It is impossible—I cannot be your wife!

COUNT: You—what is this? You cannot? A-h-h! You do not love—you—ah! terrible! terrible!

PEARL: I highly respect you, Count. That is all.

COUNT: Blackness is here before my eyes! It is cruel! You I do not blame! I was blind! I was blind! There is another! But I did not think! Ah! It is terrible—terrible!

PEARL: May I hope, Count, that you will forget her who is the innocent cause of all your suffering?

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COUNT: Forget? Never! I cannot forget! It has been my one passion! May happiness be yours! I shall go from here! Misery be mine forever! Adieu! Adieu! (*Exit.*)

PEARL: Poor Count! How I pity him! It is the first time, and I pray it may be the last, that I bring anguish to any human heart!

END OF SCENE 2.

Scene 3. A street.

Enter VON GUTTENBERG and MILWARD. MILWARD wears false beard.

MILWARD: So she makes her *début* to-night. Delamere is not a member of the company?

VON GUTTENBERG: No, but he friends is with all the actors and actresses. He a fine musician is.

MILWARD: Think you they will leave the theater soon?

VON GUTTENBERG: Only when the play is done. They will all then to Herrick's café go.

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Delamere will a supper give to Mrs. Les—your wife, and the actors and actresses also he has invited.

MILWARD: Is the place respectable?

VON GUTTENBERG: That I cannot sure say. I have never in there been. It is a place for the actors the most. Always it is gay and lively.

MILWARD: You have definite suspicions of Delamere's intentions toward my wife?

VON GUTTENBERG: I will tell you. When I did learn that she was your wife I watched. He always was to her very friendly. I followed him one day and to the exchange he went. Then I saw how he did gamble. He much was excited, buying—buying everything. I went away and the next day I again went. He was there. A man to me pointed him out and said that he much money did lose the day before. So I waited and found he was losing again more. After I watched him and he did go to all kinds of bad places. He made free with the street women, and ach! what a man to be with nice ladies like your wife!

MILWARD: You are right, my friend. Such a man as he has no place amid decent society. Listen. He was once my dearest friend. He has grievously deceived me—as he, no doubt, will deceive my wife. At another time I will tell you

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the whole story. Where can you be seen in the morning?

VON GUTTENBERG: If you wish, at Fifth Avenue Hotel.

MILWARD: Good. I should much desire a parting word with you. Believe me, the concern you have displayed for an entire stranger shall not soon be forgotten. At present I can offer nothing but thanks. (*Grasps VON GUTTENBERG's hand.*)

VON GUTTENBERG: Mr. Milward, what I can do I will. I at ten will meet you at the hotel. When I can serve you it will make me happy.

MILWARD: Once more, I thank you! (VON GUTTENBERG *exits.*) As true a man as ever breathed, or I am no judge of an honest heart! Now which way lies duty? What course is best? Shall I play the spy or go to her and implore her to return? Suppose their diversions are innocent? Will they not laugh at me—hurl contempt upon my head? Will she not ask why I dare to meddle in her affairs? What can I say—how explain my presence? She will despise me the more for spying upon her after I had given her freedom. Ah! then their close friendship! Have they both deceived me? Was their meeting accidental? I am tortured by doubt. Is

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it not better to remain in ignorance than to know a truth that may condemn her? I can do nothing—neither to warn or guard her. My hands are tied. I know not which way to turn. Be my resolve what it may, this *rôle* ill befits me. Away with the badge of distrust and foul suspicion that implies a stain upon the mother of my child! (*Plucks off beard and casts it to the ground.*) It is unworthy a man of honor! She has chosen her path! My God! yes! Then mine lies here! (*Goes out.*)

END OF SCENE 3.

Scene 4. Interior of café. Doors, C. and R. At L. a private compartment, the interior being in full view of the audience, containing table, two chairs, and lounging couch; on table are bottles and glasses. Door leading from main interior into private compartment. In center of stage large table, at which, as scene opens, are discovered ADELAIDE at head, facing the audience, DELAMERE at her right, DOROTHY at her left, and other members of the theatrical company suitably dispersed. Scene opens to a burst of laughter.

DELAMERE (*rising*): And now drink again to

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the success of the beautiful Adelaide Lester, the queen of the American stage!

ALL: Hear! hear! Speech! speech!

ADELAIDE: Friends, I cannot express how grateful I am for your most cordial reception. I came among you a total stranger only one month ago, and to-night I feel as though I had known each and every one in this company for years. I fully realize that without your assistance my part would have been a failure. For myself I can say that my poor talents——

FIRST GENT: You made the “hit” of the season! Poor talents!

DOROTHY (*pulling* ADELAIDE): Sit down, Adelaide! We have heard that sort of talk before. And for gracious sake stop blushing.

ADELAIDE: Blushing! Why, I am not blushing!

DOROTHY: Oh, no! She isn’t blushing, is she?

ALL (*laughing*): Just a rosy little tint, that’s all!

ADELAIDE: Am I, Mr. Delamere?

DELAMERE (*looking at her critically*): A tinge of rouge. Nothing more. Let me decide this matter. (*Takes handkerchief, puts his arm about her neck, and proceeds to rub.*)

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FIRST LADY: He's making a pretty mess of it!

SECOND LADY: It's worse than ever!

DOROTHY: Did you ever know a man who could tell the difference between a made-up and an every-day face?

FIRST LADY: Why, they don't know paint from powder!

ADELAIDE: And Mr. Delamere is easily placed in this category. I grant his ability to distinguish himself as a massage artist. He could make quite an impression on the Venus de Milo. But I shall advise him to confine his talents to the manipulation of statues, and not aspire to become a beauty specialist. As such he would undeniably prove a dismal failure. In neither case could he count on my patronage.

DELAMERE: I will submit that Adelaide is not a competent judge of my abilities. She needs no make-up. With her it is a waste of time to put on the finishing touches. Art is a wholly superfluous adjunct to the brilliant natural perfections of our guest of honor.

DOROTHY: Would you just listen to him! It's your turn now, Adelaide. Pay him back in his own coin. And don't spare him, either.

ADELAIDE: You must understand, friends,

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that Mr. Delamere is a poet. To be one of the long-haired genus is to admit that the imagination knows no bounds—that it is perfervid. Minus an imagination of the perfervid variety, Mr. Delamere would degenerate into a mere mortal—like any one of us. He must keep up the illusion—or delusion, whichever you please—that woman is a goddess, no matter what his private belief may be. It would be ruination to his art to speak the cold, unsympathetic truth as we common mortals usually see it. To him we are clothed in rainbow tints that captivate the eye and bring rapture to the soul. Is it strange, then, that upon the slightest provocation he unslings his ever-ready lyre and sounds pæans to the glory of our sex?

ALL: No! no! (*All applaud.*)

FIRST GENT: Bravo! The poet's outdone!

SECOND GENT: Good for Miss Lester!

FIRST GENT (*drinking*): Here's to the ladies
—God bless 'em!

SECOND GENT: Hurrah for the poet!

THIRD GENT: A poem by the poet! Give us
a recitation!

DOROTHY: No, a song—a song!

FIRST LADY: Yes, Mr. Delamere, a song! Do
oblige us!

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SECOND LADY: Why can't he read some verses afterward?

DOROTHY: To be sure! A song first and the verses to follow! Come, Mr. Delamere, we're waiting!

DELAMERE: Excuse me, we are neglecting the wine. (*He fills ADELAIDE's glass. Rises.*) Here's good luck to all! May our lives ever be as free from care as they are to-night! May we look back upon this night of festivity as a fit baptism for the future histrionic star—the peerless Adelaide Lester! May she reach the pinnacle of her ambition in her chosen profession! And may you all receive due reward for your efforts in the same direction!

ALL: Hear! hear! (*All drink.*)

DOROTHY: Now the song!

(DELAMERE *sings. All applaud.*)

ALL: Good! Splendid! Another! Another!

FIRST GENT (*rising unsteadily*): No! I'm next. Lemme sing. Hold on! Waiter! More wine! Watch the bottles! Fill up again! Heals M-s-h Lester! Here's to everybody! Hurrah! (*All drink.*)

(FIRST GENT *sings drunkenly a stanza or two. All applaud and he drinks again. As he finishes his glass he topples over and drags his neighbor*

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with him. They roll under table, overturning their chairs as they do so. The ladies jump up excitedly and run off through Door, R. ADELAIDE, dazed by the wine she has drunk, staggers toward L. and enters private compartment. She throws herself on couch. DELAMERE, who has been watching her, softly closes door. Meanwhile the FIRST and SECOND GENTS have regained their equilibrium and with the THIRD GENT go out, Door, R. Waiter enters, C. D. DELAMERE hands him bill. He clears off main table, turns down lights, and exits, C. D. DELAMERE enters private room, gazes for a moment at the motionless form of ADELAIDE, then kneels at her side and clasps her in his arms. He showers kisses upon her lips, while she, still in a stupor, half raises herself, not knowing what she does, and throws her arms around his neck. Music as curtain descends.)

CURTAIN.

END OF ACT III.

ACT IV.

Time: The next morning.

Scene 1. ADELAIDE'S boudoir. She is discovered half reclining in easy-chair.

ADELAIDE: What a hideous nightmare! Horrible dream! Am I awake or do I yet sleep? Sleep—dream? No, it was no dream! Would to God it were! Let me be calm—let me think! What—what— (Rises.) I am still dazed! My head reels! Oh, my temples! What misery! what misery! I must control myself! I must recall it all! I must know—horrible! horrible! Am I going mad? I tremble! I faint! (Sinks down in seat.) What is this? Why is my heart like ice? I know nothing! He—I—fool! (Rises.) Why did I drink wine? Why let the accursed draught make of me a slave? It has linked me with the beasts of earth! And I a mother! God! God! How fallen! how fallen! Was it, indeed, I? No! no! I am innocent!

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I have done no wrong! Let him answer! That man—foul, deceitful, unmanly being! Let him be scourged by remorse that shall cling to him until his dying hour! Where is he? What is he doing now? Is he here? Is he coming? How did I reach home? Did he come with me? Where was Dorothy—and our friends? All is blank! Were we alone—he and I—there—in that place? Were we—ah, yes! yes! It all breaks upon me! Yes, he sat next me while we drank! He filled my glass! I drank! He filled again! Then he sang! I drank and grew dizzy! My head reeled! My brain throbbed! I was staggering! That little room! Yes! I entered—sank down—lost consciousness! Ah! the awakening! Something seemed to fill the very air! Appalled, I shrank within myself! He it was! He stood glowering! I sought to rouse myself—to fight away this horrible apparition—to overcome the spell of his presence! Impossible! Exhausted by the effort, I drooped limply—I was powerless! For a moment he was gone! Through the dense mist I saw him again! He floated here and there! Suddenly he towered before me! I felt my doom! He touched me! His embrace, like ten thousand electric shocks, roused my every fiber! His eyes, luminous with passion, blazed into my soul! His

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lips, reeking as of nectar, drank of mine! His hot breath seared my bosom! Helpless in his strong, sensuous clasp, I yet struggled against him! Alas! without avail! His kisses, like molten lava devouring the earth, consumed me! I was his slave—his slave! What else? What else? Heavenly Father, what else? Ah! It was not I! It was not I! A fearful fantasy fills my brain! I am not myself! (*Sinks down and weeps.*)

(*A knock is heard. She opens door and DELAMERE enters. He affects not to notice her distress.*)

DELAMERE: I thought you would be expecting me after our *tête-à-tête* of last night—or rather this morning.

ADELAIDE: That is why you came?

DELAMERE: Exactly.

ADELAIDE: Then it were better you had remained away. I did not wish to see you.

DELAMERE: This is a strange—an unkind greeting, Adelaide.

ADELAIDE: Do you deserve better?

DELAMERE: Yes. I came to talk over matters in relation to your future happiness.

ADELAIDE (*scornfully*): You are doubtless very much concerned about my future happiness!

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DELAMERE: More than you think or are willing to give me credit for.

ADELAIDE: Oh, yes! I know I do a great wrong to question the motives of so noble a man! You are one of those who——

DELAMERE: Come, come, Adelaide, this is folly! What's done can't be undone. Let us look at this matter calmly. Let us be frank with each other. You know the meaning of marriage. So do I. You had an unloving husband; I an unloving wife. Why should their loss remain unsupplied? We shall find in each other——

ADELAIDE: Hush, sir! These things to you are commonplaces. As a worn-out glove is cast aside, so husbands and wives are by you put away to please every fleeting caprice. Have you no regard for the sanctity of the marriage bond? But why do I ask? Your words—your actions have already answered in trumpet tones that you care naught for the laws of God nor man!

DELAMERE: What avails recrimination? Nothing is gained. You understand me. I desire your love——

ADELAIDE: Not another word! Oh, how I have been deceived in you!

DELAMERE: How beautiful you look this morning, Adelaide! More charming than ever! (Goes

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close to her, then suddenly clasps her around the waist.)

ADELAIDE (*struggling*): Release me, sir! (*He releases her.*) At last you stand unmasked! You are willing that I should know you in your proper guise—an unbridled libertine!

DELAMERE: A harsh word, Adelaide, and unjust! My treatment of you does not warrant its use. Did I not really love you—

ADELAIDE: Love! Heavens! Love!

DELAMERE: Yes, love! Honorable love!

ADELAIDE: Honorable!

DELAMERE: I repeat—honorable love! Scorned as I am at this very minute, I tell you there is no one in this world I care for but you. I sought your love honorably. I was repulsed. Let us go back to the days when you lived with your husband. Was I not within your house days and weeks at a time? Did I in word, deed, or look once overstep severest propriety? I challenge you to bring a single charge against my conduct! (*A pause.*) You do not answer. My words are true. I loved you then. I love you now.

ADELAIDE: Heavens! Talk no more of love! You insult life's holiest sentiment! Men like you are beyond the pale of exalted passion! To you it does not exist! To degrade—to brutify—to

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drag all to your own level of wickedness—such is your aim—such your delight !

DELAMERE: Listen to me, Adelaide—listen a moment longer—and then finally judge me. Unaware of the real strength of my regard for you, I left you with Frank four months ago. In this house we met accidentally. You told me of your estrangement. I learned that on both sides it was considered final. Then for the first time I realized how dear you were to me. Not till then had I dared hope. Not till then did I dare to dwell upon the bliss that might be mine. I did not forget that you had always admired my work—my voice—my playing. You had encouraged me—at times had even taken my part against your husband. Was this not enough to give me hope? Gazing upon those rare perfections that are yours alone, and knowing you to be free, the pent-up fires of an unextinguishable passion broke through all restraints. I proffered you my love. You saw fit to reject it. But my longings were increased. I determined to possess you at all hazards.

ADELAIDE: A noble resolve, truly !

DELAMERE: Condemn me if you will. I am not to blame. Did you but know the mighty power you wield over my heart—did you but know the sleepless nights—the hauntings of my waking

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hours—the hopes—the fears—the dread—the ecstasy—with you and you always the central figure! Did you but know—yes! I say it—this frenzy—it is more than love!—this frenzy is the fruit of your dazzling charms! You have made a madman of me!

ADELAIDE: A specious plea, to gloss over vile iniquity! The common defense of every man whose passions are sole master of his being! A million advocates of your example cannot alter the clear fact that your actions have shown you to be utterly devoid of all truth, principle, and honor!

DELAMERE: I am willing that you should reproach me, but that is no reason why you should be unjust. You believe that a man who loves intensely—madly should at a mere word give up his hopes, relinquish thoughts of happiness, and forget her who is the one bright star of his existence. He is, indeed, contemptible who, loving thus, calmly accepts his answer and departs. She who is worth winning is worth fighting for.

ADELAIDE: Men—true men—who love will sacrifice much—nay, everything, for the women of their regard. Others, again, who utter loudest their honeyed phrases can, without a qualm, blast a woman's life and bring her untold misery!

DELAMERE: Misery need not be yours, Ade-

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laide. I stand ready to do everything in my power to make life bright for you. You do not intend to go back to your husband. Once again I ask you to come with me. Accept—

ADELAIDE: You shall not speak of that! I have heard enough—too much! I have wronged myself to give ear to any of your words! Yet I now know you! There can be no mistake! You have confessed yourself! You have taught me what to expect! I will be frank, too! I know not how to turn! You are the cause! I am not what I was yesterday, but you shall not drag me to a lower level! To you I am indebted for a distress of mind that benumbs my faculties—chills my being! It is your work! Gloat over it! Now go! Let me not see your face again!

DELAMERE: I go at your command. But permit me a final word. Through you I am now wealthy. The mine is paying far beyond my most sanguine expectations. Your generosity has made everything possible. First, I desire to say that you may draw upon me at any time for the two thousand dollars advanced. You may need more. Do not restrict yourself. I can stand any drain—from you. It is my intention to found an American salon—the home of art—where shall flourish

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in their highest excellence those arts of which we both are votaries and others that refine and elevate the mind. It is a grand conception. Its realization is near. Yet all is incomplete until a living Venus shall adorn this domain of art and beauty and lend her scintillant charm to its surroundings. You, Adelaide, shall be the Venus to preside over all—queen of love and empress of my heart.

ADELAIDE: Heavens! No more! Go now—go—go at once! (*He draws near to her as if about to speak.*) Leave me to myself! Have pity! I must not talk now! I cannot! I know not what I would say! Give me time for thought! You are a man! Do not further tempt me! Be noble—for once! Leave me, I implore you! Return, if you will, later—perhaps I can talk then calmly! But no more! no more now!

DELAMERE: I respect your wishes. Adieu—for an hour. (*Exits.*)

(ADELAIDE *sinks to the floor, her head resting in an arm-chair.*)

ADELAIDE: My God! My God! What shall I do? My poor child! My poor child!

END OF SCENE 1.

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Scene 2. Parlors, Hotel Glenalvon. Same as Act I.

Enter WIDDESTON.

WIDDESTON (*executing a step*): Zounds! I feel as chipper as a two-year-old! and just turned forty! Ha! ha! ha! How gracefully the old lady took the news! I was half prepared to beat a retreat when she looked at me! But Pearl—bless her sweet soul!—was so pleadingly meek and lovely that her mother capitulated on the spot! And the Count—'pon my word, I feel sorry for him! From what Pearl—Pearl (*lovingly*) says, he is quite heart-broken! It was certainly a case of misplaced confidence on his part! Oh, sweet Columbia! how cordial are our relations! Great Britain and America! Another tie that binds! Te-te-ti-ti-tum-tum! (*Dances.*)

Enter SEABURY.

SEABURY: Hello, Widdeston! You seem hilarious!

WIDDESTON: Hilarious! Why, my dear boy, I am luxuriating in the Garden of Eden! Elysium is within my grasp! (*Clasps SEABURY and whirls him round several times.*)

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SEABURY (*puffing*): Well! That is the first time the appellation of Elysium was ever applied to Thaddeus Seabury. Evidently something of surpassing, if not abnormal, importance is responsible for your extraordinary demeanor. Your characteristics, sir, are stability, sobriety, and solidity. A peculiar—an inexplicable transmogrification has taken place. What, sir, is the predisposing cause of this remarkable ebullition of jocularity?

WIDDESTON: It is a secret, but— (*Whispers in SEABURY'S ear.*)

SEABURY: What! Connubial predilections! Ah! You have discovered, have you, that not the least of this country's attractions is its unapproachable femininity! You, sir, have exhibited a keen appreciation of the best among our natural productions. I congratulate you. Ah, what appeals with similar force—with mightier momentum—with grander gratification to the immortal instincts of man than reciprocity of affection? Search the world from pole to pole and you find nothing! Again I congratulate you! May this matrimonial alliance conduce in every regard to your unmitigated bliss! I suggest an adjournment to where we can at once submerge

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the interior man and continue our dissertation upon this interesting subject! (*Exit both.*)

Enter COUNT and MRS. HARTLEY.

MRS. HARTLEY: I am indeed sorry, Count, that you leave us. There has been no fault with the service?

COUNT: No! no! It is excellent—your *ménage*, your *cuisine*, your *maison*—*bien!* everything! It is not that! I thank you, madame, for your attention. I could wish nothing more—yes! one. Pardon, madame—I speak at random!

MRS. HARTLEY: Your society has honored us, Count. We shall regret to lose it.

COUNT: And I yours. It has been a pleasant stay but for one thing—that is past! My baggage I will have prepared—

Enter DOROTHY.

MRS. HARTLEY: Miss Dorothy, the Count is ready to go.

DOROTHY: Ready to go! Where?

MRS. HARTLEY: He returns to France at once.

DOROTHY: It can't be possible! Do you mean it, Count? Such a short stay! Not two months,

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I'm sure! Why, you haven't remained long enough to explore Richmond Borough, let alone big old New York!

COUNT: You have a great city. I have seen much of it. I am French. It is difficult for a foreigner who comes on a visit to obtain real benefit from his contact with your people. Your social customs and life are so different; he must stay and study if he expects to know you thoroughly. That I cannot do. Then I long again for my Paris. There only am I at home.

DOROTHY: You find too, Count, don't you, that Americans are unappreciative—that they seem to be so much taken up with themselves that they pay little attention to the high qualities of foreign visitors who honor this country by their presence?

COUNT: It is true of some of them. Mrs. Hartley, can you now oblige—

MRS. HARTLEY: Certainly, Count. (Mrs. HARTLEY *courtesies and precedes the COUNT out.*)

DOROTHY: Got the' mitten! Ha! ha! ha! Why didn't he say so instead of beating around the bush in such an idiotic fashion? Oh, no! He couldn't feel at home anywhere but in gay Paree! Our customs and life, too, are so different! It's too bad! Poor Count! His lacerated heart

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needs the balm of rest and a change of air. Hoity-toity! His wounds will not take long to heal. The vision of another American heiress is the real panacea for his poor bruised anatomy. Like the rest of them, he will reap consolation in the thought that some day a flock of glittering, gleaming American eagles will wing their way in his direction. Oh, dear! Oh, dear! What would the poor world do without these dainty darlings of nobility! Well, I'm sure they are good for one thing—they add to the gayety of nations. At least, I can speak for the American nation, or a part of it that happens to be in this room. Ha! ha! ha! Oh, dear! Oh, dear!

Enter DELAMERE.

DOROTHY: Don't mind me, Mr. Delamere. I am troubled with these little spells occasionally. Oh, dear! Oh, dear!

DELAMERE: You are selfish, Miss Dorothy. Why may I not share your jollity with you?

DOROTHY: We lose a guest to-day.

DELAMERE: If that is your idea of a joke, I would suggest you mention it to Mrs. Hartley. I fancy she would see it in a different light.

DOROTHY: Oh, but you don't know! Think of

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a wooer traveling several thousand miles across the briny deep, as the song-books say, only to get the mitten! And what made matters still worse for him, he was certain of his conquest in advance! He came, he saw, he fled away! Ha! ha! ha!

DELAMERE: I presume you allude to the Count. Has he really been rejected?

DOROTHY: Well, he's going to-day—now—this very instant! Pearl doesn't go with him. It looks rather like a rejection.

DELAMERE: I am surprised. I thought the match as good as made. Mrs. Westholme seemed to have her heart set upon it.

DOROTHY: Everybody in New York saw that. Her efforts were visible to all but the blind. Thank goodness! Pearl showed herself a girl with a mind of her own. Not the namby-pamby creature that says "yes, mamma," to every notion of her mother's. The Count was a harmless, inoffensive person. I had no particular objection to him, only I am a believer in home industries. If there is to be a marriage industry, I want to see our good American boys reaping the benefits. Those are my sentiments. I wish I had the opportunity to say "no" to a score or two of titled upstarts.

DELAMERE: You are entirely too radical, Miss Dorothy. A title may be borne by a good man,

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who at the same time has a fervent regard for an American woman. Would you oppose such a marriage?

DOROTHY: I was not speaking of the rare exceptions! Gracious! I must see Adelaide! Will you be at the theater to-night?

DELAMERE: That depends.

DOROTHY: Do come. I want your criticism. Something did not run well last night, I thought.

DELAMERE: I won't promise. If possible I will come.

DOROTHY: Thanks. (*Exit.*)

DELAMERE: She has gone to Adelaide. So will I go to Adelaide when your errand's done, Miss Dorothy! (*Looks at watch.*) How the time drags! I said an hour! I was foolish! I gave her too much time! Strike while the iron is hot—the only course in matters of the heart! Delays are dangerous! Why do I doubt? She is mine! Can she turn back now? How can she retrace her steps? Whither can she go but where I lead her? Whither turn but to my arms? What do but my bidding? How beautiful she looked this morning with her hair awry, her face so sad and dreamy, the crystal teardrops glistening in her divine eyes! I could scarce contain myself as I gazed upon her! Let me see—a trip abroad first. When we return,

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a plunge into society. Then, my American salon shall engage our attention. A house here. Another in Paris. The *élite* of the world shall sit at our table! All is within reach! She alone remains to crown my highest desires! Yet—yet—till I possess her completely—till she surrenders herself to me body and soul—my mind will not be free from doubt! I must to her! At once to know her answer! (*Exit.*)

Enter DOROTHY and VON GUTTENBERG.

DOROTHY: The wretch! He has treated Adelaide shamefully!

VON GUTTENBERG: I always did think that Delamere was a mean man.

DOROTHY: Yes, and Adelaide had such faith in his friendship.

VON GUTTENBERG: And that good, kind man—he away went—

DOROTHY: What are you talking about?

VON GUTTENBERG: Ah, Miss Dorothy, I promised you to tell not. Mr. Milward was here. I to him wrote. When I thought of the little child I sure could no longer sleep. My heart like lead was always. I could not rest while such fine people with a lovely child did live apart. So he did come. He his wife loves.

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DOROTHY: Now let me give you a bit of advice. Never try to patch up domestic quarrels. You will have only your trouble for your pains—and get yourself disliked at the same time. Adelaide will never go back to her husband.

VON GUTTENBERG: If I could something do——

DOROTHY: Don't be foolish, baron. Let other people manage their own affairs. I know Adelaide. You can do nothing.

VON GUTTENBERG: Then I will my eye keep on that Delamere. When he——

Enter DELAMERE. He does not observe DOROTHY and VON GUTTENBERG.

DELAMERE: Furies! Disappointment upon disappointment! Knocked—got no answer. Went back again—same result. Is she playing with me? Can it be possible—— (Turns and sees DOROTHY and VON GUTTENBERG.) Ah, excuse me! I trust I—— (They turn their backs upon him. He walks away. Aside:) Oho! Aha! So Adelaide has told of our little interview! The ban is upon me! We shall see! We shall see! (Exit.)

DOROTHY: He will be back again. Let us go. (Both exit.)

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Enter WIDDESTON and BAGSBY.

WIDDESTON: Since you missed Milward, we must do what we can without the information expected from him. Delamere is here. I saw him five minutes ago. This matter must be probed to the bottom without delay. As a precaution, have an officer ready. He may be innocent, but his actions look strangely like guilt. He is a man of mystery, whatever be his connection with the Earl's death. To-day I solve him. See about the officer at once, Babsby.

(As BAGSBY turns to go DELAMERE enters. He pauses, looks intently at BAGSBY, then comes down as BAGSBY exits.)

DELAMERE: Fine day, Mr. Widdeston!

WIDDESTON: Very.

DELAMERE: What equals the bracing air of a crisp October morning? It is the true tonic for the lazy blood, a discounter of nostrums, and a death-knell of disease!

WIDDESTON: I agree with you. To me, however, the freshness is too sharp. The English climate to which I am accustomed, while more humid than yours, is yet milder. I like it better. Use

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breeds such a habit in a man, as our great poet says, that even upon a day like this I long for the mugginess of Old England. You have never visited my country?

DELAMERE: I—oh, yes. That is, not in many years. I dimly recall a visit once made with my father. I was very young.

WIDDESTON: Did you travel?

DELAMERE: No. As I remember, business called him to London. We remained there.

WIDDESTON: You did not go to Staffordshire?

DELAMERE (*starting visibly*): Staffordshire!

WIDDESTON: You know something of the country?

DELAMERE: My youthful exercises on the map of England have left an impression, though it may be slight.

WIDDESTON: I see. Geography was, perhaps, not your forte. Some day I will tell you a tale of Staffordshire. By the way, you recall our conversation of yesterday regarding the Earl Charles mine?

DELAMERE: Perfectly.

WIDDESTON: I stated my desire to invest some capital, particularly because the mine was named after an Englishman. I confess I am interested in learning how or why the title was selected.

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DELAMERE: You cannot learn it from me.

WIDDESTON: Why?

DELAMERE: Have I not already told you that I am unacquainted with the circumstances?

WIDDESTON: Very true. But it does not explain your previous contradiction.

DELAMERE: Previous contradiction! What do you mean?

WIDDESTON: You never said that you had named this mine?

DELAMERE: Never! What are you driving at, anyway?

WIDDESTON: You shall see presently. Tell me, did you not for secret reasons—reasons that might prove inconvenient to you should they be known—name this mine yourself?

DELAMERE: Look you, sir! You are impertinent! What matters it to you how the mine was named?

WIDDESTON: Possibly a great deal. Why have you taken such pains to conceal—

DELAMERE: I decline to discuss the matter further.

WIDDESTON: Will you answer one question?

DELAMERE: It is my personal affair. I refuse to satisfy the petty inquisitiveness of an entire stranger.

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WIDDESTON: Then I shall compel you! I ask you again—

DELAMERE: And I say again that I will not submit to your insolent catechising! (*Turns to go, but WIDDESTON places himself in the way.*)

WIDDESTON: Did you not kill the Earl Charles of Kenmore?

DELAMERE: Ha! ha! ha! No! fool! Let me pass!

WIDDESTON: Not till you have explained his death! You—

DELAMERE: Beware, sir! You may go too far!

WIDDESTON: Ho, Bagsby!

Enter BAGSBY,

Bagsby, is that the man you met in Arizona? (*BAGSBY nods.*) Is he the man who told you the Earl Charles was killed in an accident? (*BAGSBY nods again.*) Is he the man who said he had named the mine in memory of a friend? (*BAGSBY nods.*) Is he the man who said the Earl is dead, but his name lives? (*BAGSBY nods.*) Now, sir, you were his friend. You have evaded my inquiries. Your actions bespeak a guilty conscience. The Earl Charles is dead—dead by your hand. Explain your part in this transaction or answer to

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the law for the murder of the Earl Charles.
Bagsby, call the officer!

DELAMERE: Hold! Who are you? What gives you right to delve into the grave of the past and fling forth the clanking bones? Why seek you to lift from oblivion a life that should be lost for evermore? Why revive a memory in whose unfathomed depths lay the secret of life and death?

WIDDESTON: By a right—by a power delegated from him who called the Earl Charles son I pursue this quest.

DELAMERE: What! "Him who called the Earl Charles son!" My—

WIDDESTON: The Duke of Kenmore!

Enter JOHN ELLISON. He walks to DELAMERE and lays hand on his shoulder, at the same time revealing a weapon.

ELLISON: George Stanley, I give you one chance for your life!

DELAMERE: Name it!

ELLISON: Marry my sister!

DELAMERE: I accept it! I am ready! (*Turns to go.*)

ELLISON: Stay! They will be here!

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Enter MRS. ELLISON, MAY, and CLERGYMAN.

Let the ceremony proceed !

(As the CLERGYMAN makes ready WIDDESTON interposes.)

WIDDESTON: Hold ! You know not what you do ! Upon that man's head rests the shadow of a greater crime than you know aught of ! Let not double misery be hers ! To Heaven let him answer for his crime against virtue, to the law for the murder of the Earl Charles of Kenmore !

ALL: Murder !

Enter OFFICER.

WIDDESTON: There stands your man, officer !

DELAMERE: Stand back ! The Earl Charles lives ! I swear it !

WIDDESTON: Lives ?

DELAMERE: Ay, lives ! He is here now—in this very room ! You look upon him ! I am he !

WIDDESTON: You—the Earl Charles ! Never ! A mere trick, officer ! Take him away !

(The OFFICER approaches DELAMERE.)

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ELLISON: What! Escape me! No! Not for ten thousand murders! Die! devil! (*Fires and Delamere falls.*)

(*Widdeston rushes to Delamere's side and supports his head.*)

Enter Dorothy, Mrs. Hartley, Von Guttenberg, followed by Seabury.

DELAMERE: I am done for. Here. (*Takes papers from inside pocket of coat and hands to Widdeston.*) These deeds belong to Milward, my friend! I—wronged—him! Tell him— (*Groans, turns feebly to Widdeston, and tries to speak.*)

WIDDESTON: He is dying! (*A pause.*)

(*By a final effort Delamere takes another paper from pocket and hands to Widdeston.*)

DELAMERE: That letter—give—oh—tell—Duke—father—forgive—oh! (*Raises himself spasmodically, tears open his shirt.*) See! I—I am—Earl Charles! (*Dies.*)

WIDDESTON (*recognizing the Earl's birthmark*): My God! It is—it is the Earl Charles!

CURTAIN.

END OF ACT IV.

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ACT V.

Six months are supposed to elapse between Acts IV. and V.

Scene 1. Residence of MILWARD, SR. Time, April. Typical Southern country home, with large veranda, trailing vines, and flowers. House to left. Summer-house at front of stage. Rustic bench at side of summer-house, concealed from back of stage by foliage. Bench at back. Tennessee River in distance.

Enter VON GUTTENBERG, ADELAIDE lingering behind.

VON GUTTENBERG (*looking around*): How quiet! No one here, it seems. Let us sit awhile and wait. (*She sits weakly on rustic bench.*) Are you not well, Mrs.—Mrs. Milward?

ADELAIDE (*rising*): I cannot bear this! Let me return, I entreat you! How can I face him? He will spurn me! Oh, I must go! There is no hope! I cannot—cannot stay!

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VON GUTTENBERG: Listen again to me. What would you do? Be not rash. All shall be well. Be brave, dear lady, and have patience.

ADELAIDE: Oh, you are so kind. I am distracted! I know not what I do! Forgive me, dear friend. I have given you so much trouble. Never—never can I repay you. But listen! He will upbraid me. I know it. He will say—no! no!—the thought is too terrible! Oh! I must—I must go!

(He seeks to detain her.)

VON GUTTENBERG: Dear, dear madam, stay! You are now here. In a little while all will be over. You will be happy—you and your husband and your lovely child. Ah! remember your child!

ADELAIDE: My child! God sustain me! My child! Yes—yes! For her sake I will endure the ordeal! The thought of her shall give me strength! Let him turn from me, heap coals of fire upon my head, tear my heart—anything—only that I may see my child again, that I may clasp her to my hungry mother's breast, that I may hear her sweet lips murmur “mother” once again! Then let me die! I am resigned!

VON GUTTENBERG: Never fear, dear madam. All shall yet be well. Something here (*touching his breast*) tells me I am right. Your husband is

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a noble gentleman. You shall hear him say how sorry he is that you are not by his side. When he comes I will talk here to him. In the summer-house you can stay and listen.

ADELAIDE: Kind, kind friend! You give me such sweet hope—such courage. Yes, I will stay—will do as you direct. I can at least show how much I value the devotion you have so nobly extended. May Heaven bless you!

VON GUTTENBERG: S-h-h! (*Looking off.*) Some one approaches in the distance. It is—yes, it is Mr. Milward! Ah! There is the little girl! They are coming! Quick! Go into the summer-house!

ADELAIDE: Blinded forever be my sight if my child greets not mine eyes before all else! Let me look on her! I care not what comes after—disgrace, despair, death even, it matters not! (*Von GUTTENBERG stands back.*) Yes! it is my precious darling! Ah! so lovely, so innocent! How sweet she looks! How light her step! How blithe her prattle! See! She stoops to pluck a flower! How deftly and daintily the little fingers touch the delicate thing! Now she fondles it! She shows it to him! Smiling in his face, she makes him stoop as she fastens it in his coat! Now—now her arms are around his neck! He kisses her! Laughing

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gleefully, she runs ahead and beckons to him! He smiles, but he is pale! He—enough! enough! He has been good to her—to me! Husband, from my soul I thank thee! Now sear my heart, man! I am ready! (*Enters summer-house.*)

VON GUTTENBERG: My whole fortune would I give to be assured he will not refuse her! She is very sad, poor lady! If he is cruel she will kill herself! Of that I know. If he shall say no to me she will hear him—she will throw herself off there! (*Pointing.*) Ach! he must take her back! I will on my knees go to him! I will swear! I will prove to him that she is good and pure! I—ah! here he is!

(*Stands back.*)

Enter FRANK MILWARD and VIOLET. They come forward.

VIOLET: See, dear papa, what a beautiful nose-gay! Look, papa! That's a cowslip, that's a touch-me-not, that's a blueflag, that's a columbine, that's a jessamine, that's a lily of the valley, that's a pink, that's a—that's a—what is this one, papa?

MILWARD: Don't you remember?

VIOLET: Let me see? Oh, yes, now I know—a japonica!

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MILWARD: Correct, my little girl. The flowers are far more varied here than in the North. But you will soon learn them all.

VIOLET: Why, papa, you have lost your bluebell! Let me fasten another in your coat. There!

(He sits on bench near summer-house and takes her on his knee.)

VIOLET: Papa, are we going to stay here forever, where the pretty birds always sing and the flowers grow so sweet?

MILWARD: I trust so, darling.

VIOLET: I am so glad! It is not nice in the North, is it, papa? We never went in the woods there to pluck wild flowers and hunt for ferns. Oh! *(Clapping her hands.)* The woods and meadows here are just full of them! Everything is so beautiful—so beautiful!

MILWARD: It is lovely, indeed. At this season, darling, Nature is at her best in our glorious Southern country.

VIOLET: Why cannot mamma come and enjoy it all with us? How happy we would be!

MILWARD: Yes—yes! Look, dearest, look at the pretty goldfinch carrying food to its little ones.

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(She gets off his knee and runs to center of stage.)

VIOLET: Oh, the dear, sweet things! Aren't they cute? See them open their little yellow mouths! How good the mamma bird is! What if she went away a long, long time and nobody cared for them?

MILWARD: They would soon die, darling, if they were neglected.

VIOLET: Yes, they would die—they would die. How sad! *(Wiping her eyes.)* Little girls die sometimes because their mammas stay away, don't they, papa?

MILWARD: That is true, darling. But papa will take good care of his little girl. His constant prayer is for her health and happiness. Now, dear, run in. Find grandpa and grandma and say I am here in the garden. Old Deborah is looking for you, too, I guess.

VIOLET: Isn't she a dear old soul? But, my! how black! Why, papa, she is so black she looks just like that big spot I made when I overturned the ink-bottle yesterday. It spoiled my pretty frock, too. Wasn't it dreadful?

MILWARD: Don't worry about the ink-spot, dear. The accident could not be helped.

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VIOLET: I love you, dear papa!

(He kisses her and rises. VIOLET exits into house. MILWARD walks to C. and catches sight of VON GUTTENBERG.)

MILWARD: My dear friend Von Guttenberg! *(They shake hands.)* 'Pon my word, the most agreeable surprise of my life! I am delighted! How did you manage to find your way? You are indeed welcome! Come, have a seat here, where the breeze is cool, the shade heavy, and the view clear, and tell me all about yourself.

(They walk toward bench at back.)

VON GUTTENBERG: Thank you. But first I will look at the view.

MILWARD: Is that not a beautiful panorama?

VON GUTTENBERG: Very fine indeed. I have in Germany seen something like, yet not so pretty. The air is sweet and pure.

MILWARD: I hope you will stay and breathe it to your heart's content. You are very welcome.

VON GUTTENBERG: Yes, that I know. I have already learned of your fine Southern courtesy.

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On the train, at the station, driving to your home—everywhere it has been shown.

MILWARD: It pleases me greatly to hear you say so. Stay, and I can promise you some rare pleasure. Boating, bathing, fishing, gunning, and periodic social reunions—those are the diversions that add zest to life here in our country home. There, within a stone's throw, is the boat-house—a skiff or yawl always at your service. Yonder, near the river bend, where the pebbly beach gleams white in the sun, where the water seems more pure—there we bathe. Further up the river is a flat basin that abounds in fish. When in the mood you may test your luck with the reel and line. The spot is ideal. Expert or novice may have equal success in tempting the finny tribe. Those dense woods to the left, some three miles off, are a veritable Elysium for the enthusiastic sportsman. Then our social jubilees, in which our neighbors mingle, will afford pleasing relaxation of a different character. You will meet—but of that later. Here the ceaseless grind of industrial effort does not, as in the North, make slaves of us. There, save for brief summer-time vacations, the surge of keen competition destroys thought of things divine and leaves sordidness alone to rule the heart. Here we have time for interchange of those common obliga-

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tions due to one another as members of God's great family. Thus in communion with our Maker, with Nature, and our friends we spend our days. God is always here. Not alone on the Sabbath do we sing praises to His glory, but each day with Him we rise and in His arms at night we rest. Is it not a glorious life? Shall you not share its sweetness with us, at least, for a time?

(They seat themselves on bench.)

VON GUTTENBERG: Ah, I thank you—I thank you, Mr. Milward. I—I am expecting news from home. I cannot yet say. But when all shall be favorable it will give me the greatest pleasure to remain awhile with you in your charming home.

MILWARD: Very well, my dear friend. Suit your own convenience. I will not ask you just now to commit yourself to my programme for your entertainment. But you are here now, and I propose to make the most of your visit. Tell me, how came you to seek me out?

VON GUTTENBERG: I will be honest with you, Mr. Milward. I—I thought maybe you would like to hear about—about your wife.

MILWARD: My wife! *(Rises and walks about nervously.)*

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(ADELAIDE *appears at door of summer-house, pale and trembling with suppressed emotion. Later retires off.*)

VON GUTTENBERG: Yes. You have heard all about the tragedy in the hotel?

MILWARD: The papers were full of it the next morning. That was the day I left for the South. It was terrible! Thank God! my name and that of Mrs. Lester appeared only casually in connection with the unfortunate affair. I left Albany just in time to escape an onslaught in force by the reportorial fraternity. Had not my decision been already made to go South, I would have been driven to it by the importunities of newsgatherers seeking to make a scoop. Where was she—I mean my wife—when the killing occurred?

VON GUTTENBERG: I—I do not know. For two days after I did not see her. She, I believe, was ill. Oh, that Delamere—he was a strange man! To be the Earl Charles of Kenmore, and nobody to know it till he lay dying!

MILWARD (*sits on bench near summer-house*): I knew his history. The knowledge had much to do with my strong friendship for the man. His grand sacrifice for another appealed to me as nothing had ever done before. From the day I met

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him we were fast friends. Young, bright, ambitious, brave, he was full of the fires of a peculiar genius that inspired and fascinated me. Orestes and Pylades were not dearer to each other than my friend and I. For years we were almost inseparable. One day he related to me the story of his life. Hear it and judge for yourself whether the annals of fiction record so strange a tale. He told how through the harshness of the Duke, his father, he ran away, came to this country, met a boy of his own age, George Stanley, and induced him to leave his home and go West with him; how he observed a singular resemblance between himself and Stanley, and became irresistibly impelled to learn his chum's life in its entirety; how he drank in the recital as though a power beyond his control urged him to gain this knowledge; how after five years of companionship, braving together the dangers and enduring the privations of life in the great West, they located in Arizona and there staked a claim; how one evening, while not far from camp, in shifting his rifle from hand to arm it slipped from his grasp, striking a boulder as it fell, was discharged, and his friend lay weltering in his blood; how, as Stanley lay dying, remorse filling the Earl's heart, he swore a solemn vow to

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replace a lost son to a bereaved mother; how, burying his ill-fated friend near the spot and marking it with a cross-like boulder, he returned to Stanley's home, was received as a long-lost son, and took his place in the affections of both father and mother as though the real son; how for years he fulfilled every filial obligation. It was then I met him. Though a roamer, he religiously kept his foster parents apprised of his whereabouts, and being naturally generous, he frequently sent them money, although I do not know that they were at any time in need. Such is the story. An enigma while he lived, he remains an enigma even beyond the grave. He had been operating the Earl Charles mine and withholding my dividends, but to this day I am in utter ignorance of the means by which the capital was raised to continue the work. But for that I would be a poor man to-day.

VON GUTTENBERG: Then I will tell you. Your wife gave him the money.

MILWARD: My wife! Impossible! (*Rises and walks about.*)

VON GUTTENBERG: Here, I have the proof. This is the receipt. He gave it to your wife. It is for two thousand dollars.

MILWARD (*taking receipt*): True—true. The

AN AMERICAN EARL.

exact sum he sought to obtain from me. You got this from my wife?

VON GUTTENBERG: Yes. After Delamere died we were very friendly. She had nobody to look out for her. You were gone and she was left all alone. Poor lady! How sad she always seemed! Not on his account—oh, no! She had learned what a villain he was. I stayed by her so I could do something when she needed the advice of a friend.

MILWARD: Yes, yes, I see it all. The receipt is in my name. She has been generous. She gave him her money, though it was her all. She has grievously erred, but this tribute to her unselfishness earns my deepest gratitude.

VON GUTTENBERG: If you say that, dear friend, then—then you will take her back—you—

MILWARD: No more, I beg of you.

VON GUTTENBERG: But listen, dear Mr. Milward. I—

MILWARD. Why reopen a wound that it has pleased me to think had healed? I have schooled myself to our eternal separation. Let not your friendly zeal prompt you to a course that can bring naught but regret to us all.

AN AMERICAN EARL.

(Reënter ADELAIDE. *She stands at door of summer-house, listening.*)

VON GUTTENBERG: I must speak! I came from her. She——

MILWARD (*turns and walks to left*): No! no! The chapter is closed. Could but the past be blotted out! Could that fatal page which showed her the toy of Delamere be erased from her life! Could—ah, my friend, has she—has she not lost all claim to virtuous womanhood?

VON GUTTENBERG: No! no! Never! I swear it!

(ADELAIDE *sinks down on rustic bench and sobs.*)

MILWARD: What sound is that?

VON GUTTENBERG: It is your wife! She came with me. She has come to explain all and be again joined with you. She is innocent of wrong-doing. I swear it! She asks your love and forgiveness. Have pity! Do not send her away! Think! The mother of your darling child waits there and dies for a word of hope—of love—of pity! Will you not say it? Will you not give her life again? Go! Noble friend, husband, father, go!

AN AMERICAN EARL.

(VON GUTTENBERG withdraws. MILWARD slowly advances toward ADELAIDE. She sits in a dejected attitude at one end of the settee. He stands for a moment gazing compassionately upon her, then seats himself at her side.)

MILWARD: Adelaide—wife—weep no more! Turn to me, dearest. The dead past shall be buried—forgotten. In its place the happy present, with its world of future hope and bliss. The sweet days of yore shall return again—those days when our love was young and no shadow ever came to dim earth's brightest blessings. Our hearts were then untried—untested. The lesson has been learned—we are the better for it. It was hard, but it is learned for all eternity. Look in my eyes, darling, and read there my soul. It is yours. On your honor and truth I stake all! Come to me! Adelaide! Wife!

(She throws her arms wildly about his neck.)

ADELAIDE: My noble husband! (They embrace.)

MILWARD: After the clouds, the sunshine;
After the toil, the rest;
Fond hearts now thee entwine.
Forever thus thy path be blest.

AN AMERICAN EARL.

ADELAIDE: O bliss! O joy! My heaven-born
—let me see her!

MILWARD (*they rise*): In this moment of our
ecstasy there is still another to be remembered.
That grand man and unselfish friend, he who
without reward, save the consciousness of well-
doing, has been the instrument of all our happi-
ness—Carl Von Guttenberg! Come forth, de-
voted friend!

(VON GUTTENBERG *advances, his face beaming
with delight.*)

MILWARD (*grasping VON GUTTENBERG'S hand*):
My friend, I can—say—nothing—my heart is too
full. God bless you!

(*A pause, during which VIOLET runs out of the
house and down the steps. She stands for a mo-
ment gazing in a bewildered manner at ADELAIDE,
then with a glad cry rushes into her mother's
arms.*)

VIOLET: Mother!

CURTAIN.

END OF ACT V.

(*Music—“Heimweh,” as curtain descends.*)

FINIS.

CHARACTERS REPRESENTED.

FRANK MILWARD.

DELAMERE.

WIDDESTON.

CARL VON GUTTENBERG.

COUNT DE LEMPRIERE.

THADDEUS SEABURY.

BAGSBY.

JOHN ELLISON.

ADELAIDE MILWARD.

DOROTHY DEMING.

PEARL WESTHOLME.

MRS. WESTHOLME.

MRS. HARTLEY.

MRS. ELLISON.

MAY ELLISON.

VIOLET MILWARD.

OFFICER, CLERGYMAN, BELL BOY, ACTORS, AND
ACTRESSES.

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